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RELIGIOUS LECTURES
ON
PECULIAR PHENOMENA
IN THE
FOUR SEASONS:

- I. THE RESURRECTIONS OF SPRING:
- II. THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH OF SUMMER:
- III. THE EUTHANASIA OF AUTUMN:
- IV. THE CORONATION OF WINTER.

BY

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P R E F A C E

THE Lecture entitled 'The Coronation of Winter,' in this little volume, has been published in a pamphlet form at the request of the students of Amherst College, and the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, before whom it was originally delivered. And it was the interest manifested in that discourse, which led the author to prepare others on some rare phenomena of Spring, Summer, and Autumn, and which leads him to hope that the whole may not be unacceptable to his friends.

The author feels that Natural Religion has not yet yielded all the fruits that may be derived from it, to feed the heart of piety; especially when those fruits are ripened and gathered under the bright sun of Revelation. It is well known that the phenomena of nature have often been made to utter language opposed to Revelation, by the ventriloquizing processes of scepticism. It is hoped, therefore, that even a feeble attempt to let nature speak in unconstrained tones, will be received with favour.

The manner in which I have endeavoured to defend the Scripture doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body, by an appeal to certain principles of chemistry and physiology, which seem to have been overlooked, both by the enemies and the friends of this doctrine, seems to me quite conclusive. Yet as I have met with it in no writer, I ought not to be over confident in its validity.

AMHERST COLLEGE.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Not expecting a call for a second Edition of this Work, I made no preparation for it, and, therefore, have made no addition of consequence; save a few paragraphs, to make my views more intelligible, respecting bodily identity, and the nature of the resurrection body. The views presented on these points in the first edition are not altered; but an attempt has been made to guard them against being misunderstood. My views as to the first point, if admitted, fully set aside a stereotyped objection to the resurrection of the body, which theologians have never been able to answer, except by calling in a miracle. I respectfully invite the attention of scientific divines to this point: to detect the fallacy of my reasoning, if it be not sound, and to confirm it, if it be.

AMHERST COLLEGE.

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THE

RESURRECTIONS OF SPRING.

THE RESURRECTIONS OF SPRING.

“ But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.” 1 Corinthians, xv, 35–38.

THE resurrection of the body is eminently a revealed doctrine. After its announcement in the Bible, philosophy does indeed point us to interesting examples of transformation in the natural world, which some have considered as evidence of this doctrine; but they are rather its symbols. When satisfied of its truth, on the testimony of inspiration, these natural changes afford beautiful illustrations of a doctrine so delightful to contemplate: But the analogies fail in some of the most important points: and, therefore, have little force in argument.

On the other hand, however, philosophy has ever been ready to oppose this doctrine with

what it regards as insuperable difficulties. The most prominent one is referred to in the text. "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" enquires the votary of science, confident that his objection can never be answered. Men deposit the bodies of their friends in the grave; but do they remain there? The chemist knows full well that they suffer entire decomposition, and that the ultimate elements are scattered by the winds and the waves, and are taken up by other bodies, it may be by those of other men; so that the same particles may enter into the composition of a multitude of human beings. How then can the body, which is laid in the grave, be raised; since not even Omnipotence can make the same particles a part of two or more bodies at the same time?

From the time of the Mohammedan philosopher and physician, Avicenna, to the recent appearance of the 'Anastasis' of a distinguished American Professor, this has been the leading objection to man's resurrection: and at first view it certainly seems very strong. The subject deserves careful examination, by all the light which the Bible and philosophy are able to shed upon it. And the resurrections of nature around us, at this interesting season of the year, seem to turn our contemplations naturally to man's final deliverance from the power of the grave.

I shall first inquire, what is the scriptural doctrine of the Resurrection.

Secondly, inquire whether Natural Religion opposes, or illustrates and confirms the Scripture doctrine.

And thirdly, inquire what symbolizations of the resurrection are presented in nature at this season of the year.

1. *What then is the scripture doctrine of the Resurrection?*

In the first place, the Bible distinctly announces the fact that there will be a resurrection of the dead at the end of the world. "Marvel not at this," says Christ, "for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." But the fullest and most unequivocal evidence of a resurrection is the graphic and sublime description of it in the chapter containing the text. "Now," says the apostle, "if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." And this resurrection is to take place, according to Paul, at the coming of Christ. "Then cometh the end," says he, "when he shall

have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father."

But even this clear and decided description does not convince all men that any thing will be actually raised out of the grave. Some maintain that such language is used in accommodation to the notions of the ignorant, who look upon their bodies as their all, and could have no idea of a pure spirit. Others contend, that a spiritual body is eliminated at the period of death, and accompanies the soul in its unknown aerial flight. But such opinions can be made consistent with the Bible, only on the rationalistic principle of exegesis called accommodation; which means, when stated plainly, that we are to consult our philosophy as to what the Bible *should* mean, rather than the laws of grammatical construction to learn what it *does* mean. If language can teach that the dead are to be raised out of their graves, then the Bible does teach it; and if we may regard the statement of so simple a fact as figurative, or modal, there is no other fact stated in the Bible which may not be viewed in the same light, and thus set aside.

2. *The Bible represents the germ of the resurrection body as proceeding from the body that is laid in the grave.*

If nothing is derived from the grave, or from the body once laid there, for what possible reason

does the Bible constantly speak of a resurrection from the grave? It could serve no purpose but to mislead the reader. Nor can any reason be alleged for the use of such language. There are some subjects treated of in the Bible, so entirely removed from our knowledge, that a clear description of them cannot be given; as, for instance, Paul's account of the third heavens. But surely, it were easy enough to say whether any thing laid in the grave is raised from it. If not, how can we vindicate the author of the Bible from teaching ignorant man a falsehood?

But the text settles this point, if general considerations do not. The apostle selects a specific example from the vegetable kingdom, to answer the infidel's objection, *With what body do they come?* He supposes a kind of wheat placed in the earth, where it seems for a time to be dying; and indeed, every thing does decay except the minute germ which springs forth from, and is nourished by, the decaying cotyledon. The ascending plumule, making its way to the air, and the descending radicle, spreading in the soil, draw in nourishment from these two sources, and the expanding stalk becomes independent of the seed; and we see in it no resemblance to the seed. Yet that seed was indispensable to its germination. Just so, the apostle would have us understand, does the resurrection body arise from that which was laid in the grave.

To suppose that no such relation exists between them, and that nothing in fact is derived from the grave, is to do away entirely with the force of this beautiful illustration.

3. *The Bible represents our present organization, as not existing in the resurrection body.*

“Flesh and blood,” says Paul, “cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” “They,” says Christ, “which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels.” The employments and enjoyments of heaven are also represented as wholly spiritual, although sometimes described, from the poverty of human language, by a reference to material objects and processes. Christ represented it to his disciples as sufficient proof of his being really a man and not a spirit, after his resurrection, that he had flesh and bones, and could eat and drink.

Now all such representations clearly show that not any thing of our present organization will survive the grave. This too is demonstrated by the fact that the resurrection body will be incorruptible: an immunity naturally impossible with such bodies as we now possess.

It may be objected here, that the body, in which Christ appeared after his resurrection,

was similar to that of all men. He repeatedly ate and drank, and declared himself to be composed of flesh and bones, and invited his disciples to reach forth their hands and learn by the sense of touch, as well as sight, that his was the same body that hung on the cross, with the print of the nails still in his hands, and of the spear in his side. We have similar evidence in the cases of Lazarus, of Jairus' daughter, of Dorcas, of the young man of Nain, and of Eutychus: their bodies after their animation had the same organization as before their death.

These statements are undoubtedly correct: But there is abundant reason to believe that the resurrection bodies both of Christ and of Lazarus were the same as were laid in the tomb, reanimated before decomposition. In both cases we know that the bodies laid in the grave disappeared from thence, and were seen by their friends revivified. In the case of Christ, although some appear to have doubted for a time, yet when they saw the print of the nails and of the spear, and heard the voice, they were satisfied of the reality of the revivification, and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" And if ecclesiastical history may be credited, Lazarus survived this resurrection many years. There is every reason, therefore, to believe, that neither Christ nor Lazarus assumed spiritual bodies at the time of their resurrection, and no one will contend that,

in the other cases referred to, there was any thing more than a revivification of bodies but recently deprived of life. That Christ should have received his glorious body when he ascended to heaven, is as probable as that those who may be alive at his coming shall in like manner be changed, and the mortal put on immortality. Hence then, in our reasonings about the spiritual body, we are to leave entirely out of the account the case of Christ, of Lazarus, and the others miraculously restored to life in the times of Christ and his apostles. For these were natural bodies, not spiritual.

4. *The Scriptures represent the difference between our present bodies and the spiritual or resurrection body to be very great.*

The text makes it certain that this difference may be as great as that between a seed and the full grown plant that proceeds from it. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him." Take now a kernel of wheat, and with the naked eye what resemblance will you see in it to the full grown plant? True, the vegetable physiologist will tell us that powerful glasses may discover in that seed an embryo of the future plant, which only needs development. But to the unaided eye, there is scarcely any resemblance between

the two: and in many other seeds that resemblance is still less.

Now from this illustration we are permitted to infer as great a want of resemblance between our present and future bodies, as the seed and the plant it produces exhibit. True, had we angelic vision, we might perhaps discern the germ of the spiritual body coiled up in our present organization. But with our present means of knowledge, we can make no such discovery, nor could we probably find any external resemblance between the natural and spiritual body, had we the means of comparing them together. We are justified in supposing the greatest possible difference which can exist between matter in its most diverse forms.

Look at the subject in another point of view. Consider how few particles of the seed enter into the composition of the plant that springs from it. Compare, for instance, a forest tree, weighing many tons, with the seed, weighing a few grains, from which it sprang; and then recollect, also, that only a small part of the seed finds its way into the future plant; and we may safely say, that the proportion between the particles derived from the seed and from other sources, is only as one to a million. Yet the text justifies us in the conclusion, that equally small may be the proportion of the particles derived from our present bodies, in the resurrection

body. If only a millionth part, or a ten thousand millionth part, of the matter deposited in the grave, shall be raised from thence, it justifies the representations of Scripture, that there will be a resurrection of the dead. And why may we not suppose, that amid all the transmutations which the dead body may undergo, some infinitesimal germ may be watched over by Omniscience, and by Omnipotence at length be made to constitute the germ of the spiritual body?

5. *The Scriptures represent the spiritual body as possessing a specific and individual identity.*

By this I mean, that it will possess characteristics which mark it off distinctly from every other created thing: as the different species and individuals of animals and plants are marked off from one another in this world. This very important principle appears to me, in a great degree, to have been overlooked by commentators; and yet it seems clearly taught in the text and context. In the passage already quoted, it is said, that, "God giveth to the plant that springs from the wheat, or other seed sown, a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body;" that is, a peculiar body, one marked off from every other. The apostle proceeds to illustrate this statement, as if it were a point of great importance. "All flesh," says he, "is not the same flesh; but there is one kind

of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." He states the same fact respecting organic bodies: "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also," he adds, "is the resurrection of the dead." The Bible commonly uses language in its popular sense; but in this passage we have a nearer approach to the precise language of natural science, in its descriptions of the specific differences of different objects. True, Paul describes only differences between different tribes of animals; though in describing inorganic bodies, as the sun, moon, and stars, he refers to the characters of species. He shows us that each object and species in nature has certain characters, which distinguish it from every other object and species. And when he adds, "so also is the resurrection of the dead," he teaches that there will be a peculiarity of character that will discriminate between the resurrection body and every thing else. Nay, it appears to me that we may go further, and say, that he teaches, by implication at least, that even individual peculiarities will exist in a future world. For that same great law of fixed diversity, on which he

bases his statements as to men, beasts, fishes, and birds, does here on earth extend to individuals. They have natural peculiarities by which they are distinguished from one another, in almost every case with great ease and precision. The fair implication is, that so will it be in a future world. True, our present organization will not exist there; but this does not imply that there will be no organization. Nay, the more perfect and exalted character of that state would rather teach us that the future organization will be far more exquisite and wonderful than the present; and hence it would be strange if there should not also be still more marked peculiarities, by which each individual should be clearly known from all others. An interesting application of this principle, I leave to another part of this discourse.

6. *The Scriptures present us with several characteristics of the spiritual or resurrection body.*

The term *spiritual body*, is peculiar to Paul, and chosen probably because it comes as near to giving an idea of the resurrection body, as human language admits; not because it gives a full idea of that body. Numerous attempts have been made to define this term. It cannot mean that the future body will be spirit; for then it would not differ from the soul. It must be material, therefore, unless there be in the

universe a third substance, which is neither matter nor spirit. But if it be material, why is it called spiritual? Probably the term implies purity and dignity, in contrast with the natural body, which is gross and sensual. It may be thus termed, also, because it possesses inherent immortality, and is a congenial residence for the undying soul. But though difficult to define, the Scriptures have given us several of its characters, from which we obtain an exalted and pleasing idea of its nature. These characters are presented by way of contrast to our present bodies.

1. The spiritual body is represented as endowed with great power and activity. "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power," says the apostle: and if, as we may reasonably suppose, angels possess similar bodies, we might appeal to the Biblical descriptions of their active and powerful movements, to illustrate this position. Says the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength;" and John speaks of "a mighty angel" coming down from heaven, "who laid hold on the old serpent and bound him a thousand years;" and the ascription of wings to cherubim and seraphim, implies the power of rapid motion; so perhaps the poet hardly exceeds the literal truth, when he says of the angels, that in their war with apostate spirits, they

Pluck up the seated hills with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
Uplifted bear them in their hands.

Now there is every reason to presume that future glorified saints will possess similar power and activity: for they are said to be "like the angels," and to be "equal to the angels."

2. The spiritual body will be beautiful and glorious. "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory." It will also resemble Christ's glorified body. "Who shall change our vile body," says Paul, "and fashion it like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." In Revelation we have a figurative description of the Son of Man, that gives us an idea of surpassing glory: he was "clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow: and his eyes were as a flame of fire. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. And his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." O if such a glory shall surround the resurrection body of the saints, what a contrast to the loathsome and deformed mass

which is deposited in the grave! No wonder that the transformation demands that power in Christ, by which he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

3. The spiritual body will be incorruptible and immortal. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." In such a world as this, we see no organic being able to resist all tendency to decay, and all mechanical violence: and hence we may be unable to understand, how a material organization can remain unaffected by all chemical and mechanical agencies. But it is only a narrow mind, that supposes it understands all the possible modifications of matter; and, indeed, we do probably know of a substance in existing nature, which no such agencies can change: But more of this in another place.

Although, therefore, we have but an imperfect idea of the spiritual body, the Bible does so describe its characteristics, as to lead to exalted conceptions of its nature and glory. Indeed, the Scriptures probably give us all the information concerning it, which is important, and which in our present state we are able to understand.

4. *The Scriptures teach, that the living, at the last day, will have their natural bodies changed into spiritual.*

“Behold,” says Paul, “I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” And the Bible has given us a few examples of this sudden and astonishing transformation. It was experienced by Christ, when he was taken up and a cloud received him out of sight. It passed over Elijah also, when there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and he went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Enoch too was translated that he should not see death. In all these cases philosophy would gladly interpose a thousand questions, and try to ascertain whether there be in this world any thing analogous to such a surprising transformation, or whether it is to be resolved entirely into the special omnipotent agency of the Deity. But to all her inquiries the Bible is silent, and she has only to acquiesce in the conclusion, that the whole process is miraculous, and can be understood only when we stand upon the vantage ground and in the clearer light of eternity.

Such, if I mistake not, are the scriptural views of the resurrection. Does natural religion oppose, or illustrate and confirm, any of these statements? This is the second point to which we shall direct your attention.

1. In the first place, philosophy shows us, that the identity between the present and the resurrection body, cannot be an identity of particles, or of organization.

The chemist can demonstrate, that the body laid in the grave is decomposed into its ultimate elements, and that these, by almost endless transmutations, pass through, or rather constitute, a part of other bodies; so that the successive races of men that appear on the globe, consist, at least in part, of the same particles which entered into the composition of their progenitors. This makes it physically impossible that the identical particles or atoms, which constitute the body laid in the grave, should belong to the resurrection body as a whole.

Physiology, also, corresponds with the Bible in showing that the spiritual body must be differently organized from the natural body. For with our present organs, the body is necessarily subject to decay and dissolution. It could not be immortal and free from suffering without a constant miracle to guard it against mechanical violence and chemical disorganization. Its future organization may be more wonderful than at present; still it must be widely different, to make it immortal and incorruptible.

2. Philosophy shows us, that sameness of chemical composition, and peculiarity of form and

C

structure, are all that is essential to personal corporeal identity.

What is it that constitutes bodily identity in this world? Suppose a person born in this country, after living here twenty years, to go to China for a permanent residence. Now, as we have reason to suppose that the entire particles of which a man is composed change every few years, this individual, after residing ten years in China, will not probably retain in his composition a single particle of the body which he acquired in America. But he is still the same man, and why? *Because his body is made up of the same kinds of elementary matter combined in the same proportion as in America, and has the same form and structure.* And it matters not whence the elements of a compound are derived, whether from China or the United States; if they are only united in the same proportion, they will constitute exactly the same substance. Thus, it can make no difference from what source the oxygen and hydrogen are obtained, that form water. It will be identically the same substance, though its elements come from the antipodes. So it is with the oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, and lime, that make up the human system. The essential thing, that makes them the flesh and bones of a man, is their combination in a certain definite proportion. And though there may be a

constant loss of individual particles, yet if their place is supplied with others of the same kind, no matter whence they come, they will maintain the identity of the body, if combined in the proper proportion: for it is essentially the chemical composition, not the identity of particles, that continues a man the same from year to year.¹

The chemist, however, may doubt whether the flesh of man can be distinguished from that of beasts by its chemical composition alone; although there do exist slight differences in this respect between all classes of animals. But between man and quadrupeds, they are less than between man and birds and fishes. We are obliged, therefore, to add other characters in order to distinguish man from other animals, and individual men from one another. We say, therefore, that in order to identity, *there must be peculiarity of form and structure.* Sameness of chemical constitution, at all periods of man's existence, is the principal internal character essential to identity; while peculiarity of form and structure give the external marks by which we distinguish families and individuals from one another. And very probably, when Paul says that the flesh of man is different from that of beasts, he uses the language not in a strict

¹ I would say to the chemical reader, that I do not forget that there is such a principle as *Isomerism*; but it does not seem necessary to go into details respecting it, in this connection.

chemical sense, but embraces structure and form, as well as composition.

If this be a correct view of what constitutes personal corporeal identity in this world, it is obvious to remark, that we have only to apply it to the resurrection body, in order to meet satisfactorily the famous objection to the resurrection of the body, that its particles enter into the composition of several bodies. By this view, *it is not necessary that the resurrection body should contain a single particle of the body laid in the grave*, if it only contain particles of the same kind, united in the same proportion, and the compound be made to assume the same form and structure as the natural body. For all this is what often happens to men in this world, without exciting a suspicion that the identity of the individual is endangered. God may give to the man raised from the grave, such a body as pleases him, just as he does to the plant: but if it be only composed of the same elements in the same proportion, and have a peculiarity of form and structure, its identity with the individual buried will be preserved. Even if we admit, what it seems to me the Bible teaches, that the germ of the resurrection body does spring from the natural body in the grave, it does not weaken the force of this reply to the sceptic's objection. For that germ may not contain a millionth part of the original particles in the

natural body; and therefore, no one can say but that infinitesimal portion of the man may be preserved by Omniscience and Omnipotence, disconnected with every thing else, and be ready at the command of Jehovah, to form the nucleus of the spiritual body.

I would add, that since the subject of the resurrection of the body has been within a few years past so fully discussed by able men, and this famous objection has been the grand difficulty in the way of a literal understanding of the inspired declarations, it seems strange, I say, that this simple mode of meeting the difficulty has not been suggested; or if it has been, the fact has escaped my notice.

3. *Philosophy furnishes us an example of attenuated matter, which appears to be scarcely, if at all, affected by mechanical or chemical agencies.*

The phenomena of light, heat, and electricity, as well as the history of several comets, make it almost certain that there exists, diffused through every part of the material universe, an exceedingly subtle and active fluid, sometimes called the luminiferous ether. It seems to be the agent by which light, heat, and electricity are transmitted by undulations in every direction, with inconceivable velocity; not less than 200,000 miles per second. It exists wherever light, heat, and electricity penetrate; and, there-

fore, it is found, not only in what we call empty space, but in the most solid bodies; since they are more or less permeated by these agents. There is no evidence that this ether possesses weight, though it has the power of resistance, since it obstructs the movements of several comets. No force, which the mechanician or the chemist can exert, has the least effect upon it. Nor is it cognizable by any of the senses: and yet certain phenomena indicate its existence and prodigious activity.

Now without asserting that the spiritual body is made up of the luminiferous ether, or of a substance analogous to it, it is interesting that we have evidence of the existence of such a substance in nature, and great reason to believe it to be attenuated matter. Reasoning on the subject, we should presume that the future body would be of such a nature as to be unaffected by mechanical or chemical action; and which might exist with equal freedom, and without change, in the midst of the sun, or the volcano, or in the polar ice: and yet that it would possess great activity and energy; and such a substance we have before us in this universal ether. Of such a substance, therefore, the spiritual body may be composed, or of something analogous to it.

4. *Finally, philosophy cannot show that the germ of the future spiritual body will not arise from the grave.*

Suppose that germ to consist of the subtle fluid that has been described. Since this can be made cognizable by none of the senses, or by any other means, how do we know but it may be attached to the sleeping dust, or accompany that dust wherever it may be scattered? What though the grosser particles of the body may be decomposed and scattered to the ends of the earth, and assume new forms of organism: yet who knows but a portion of this wonderful form of matter, connected with the body in this world, may remain isolated till the resurrection morning, and await the Divine summons to be re-united with the immortal spirit? With the facts respecting the ether in mind, shall we undertake to prove this impossible? It must be a superficial philosophy that will take up such a gauntlet. And yet how often has such a philosophy put the question, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

5. *In conclusion, to prevent misunderstanding, let me recapitulate the principles I have advanced on the philosophy of this subject, with their applications.*

My first position is, that the identity between our present and our resurrection bodies, cannot be an identity of particles, or of organization. In all the discussions of this subject, which I have met with, it seems to have been taken for granted, that such must be the ground of this

identity. But I fully acknowledge that I cannot defend the resurrection of the body on such a basis, against the famous objection that identity of particles is impossible.

But secondly, I maintain that sameness of chemical composition and specific peculiarity of form and structure, do constitute a ground of bodily identity in this world; and, therefore, may do the same between our present and future bodies. Some, indeed, will not admit that identity can properly be predicated of the body at any two periods of its earthly existence: but they suppose that the ground of identity is found only in the vital or immaterial principle, residing in the body. It cannot be denied, that the cause of the peculiar chemical composition and peculiarity of bodily form, lies in the vital and intellectual principles; and, therefore, there is a vital and mental, as well as corporeal identity. But if the latter do not exist, then the foundation for the sciences of anatomy and natural history is swept away, for it is by bodily identity that the anatomist and the naturalist distinguish men from other animals, and from one another; and the fact that they have always attempted to make such distinctions, proves an intuitive conviction that there is a real ground for them in the physical constitution.

Now I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I am not maintaining that the future body

will actually have the same chemical composition and peculiarity of form as our present bodies. But I wish merely to show, that such an identity is possible, nay, credible, in order only to meet the famous objection to the resurrection of the body, grounded on the fact, that the particles of our present bodies can never be re-united in the resurrection. On this supposition, they need not have a single particle in common, in order to identity; just as is probably sometimes the case between our bodies in infancy and in old age.

I cannot see why this principle does not completely silence this time-honoured and subtle objection, which theologians have passed over, rather than answered. But what will be the real character of the spiritual body, is another question entirely. I have, in the third place, suggested, that it may be analogous in nature to the luminiferous ether; which has some properties that would render it a peculiarly fit receptacle for an immortal spirit. And I may add, that the extraordinary facts, that seem to be opening upon us, respecting the peculiar principle called *Odyle*, (if there be no mistake in the experiments,) lend increased plausibility to this suggestion. This new imponderable principle seems to exist in all bodies, but to be concentrated in some; and, therefore, it may be true, as I have suggested in the fourth place, that the germ of the spiritual body may be attached to

the sleeping dust, and in the resurrection come forth from the grave.¹

I have suggested, also, and shall in the sequel follow out the thought more fully, that the spiritual body, according to Paul, will possess a specific identity, so as to be distinguished from all other bodies, and be recognized as related to the natural body. Now suppose the spiritual body, of attenuated matter, ordinarily invisible, to be diffused through the whole corporeal frame, so as to have the same form; and suppose our future vision to be able to see that form distinctly, like the power, which in this life enables some, it is said, to discern the *odyllic* light of magnets, crystals, and even of the human body in the grave, how easy to conceive that specific resemblances to our present bodies, might be as strikingly manifest, as in the plants and animals of spring compared to those that perished in the autumn.²

¹ See Baron Von Reichenbach's Researches on Magnetism, Electricity, etc., in their Relation to the Vital Force; Translated by Prof. Wm. Gregory, of the University of Edinburgh; London, 1850.

² I hope that the explanations which I have added under this fifth head, may make my meaning more intelligible. On reading the text as it stood in the first edition, I do not wonder that I was misunderstood. (See Christian Register of Dec. 15th, 1849, and several subsequent numbers.) My statements certainly seemed discrepant to one another, and I am thankful that the Editors of the paper above named, treated me with so much kindness and liberality. I would add, that until the doctrine of a resurrection at the time of one's death, was advanced in the paper above named, I never imagined it

On these principles, then, when fairly understood, it seems to me, we may conclude that Natural Theology harmonizes fully with the revealed doctrine of the resurrection. Nay, it throws some light on the meaning of Scripture, and silences the sceptical objection. We need not, therefore, abandon this animating doctrine, or torture the language of the Bible, till it tells us that "the resurrection is already past."

It only remains, in the third place, that we point out some symbolizations of the resurrection, in the phenomena of spring. It may be thought that this part of my subject can hardly be derived from the text. True, it is only the germination and development of the vegetable world that are alluded to in the passage. But to bring the developments of the animal kingdom into the same category, is surely no violation of logic; since it is only extending to the whole organic world, what the Scriptures predicate of a part.

1. *In the first place, spring presents us with numerous examples of life emerging from apparent death.*

Had we no experience of the effects of spring, we could not imagine, during the winter months of such a climate as ours, that leaves, and flowers,

to have been adopted by any of the denomination of which that paper is the organ: so that I could not have had reference to them in any of my remarks in this sermon.

and fruit, would ever clothe the barren trees, or a green carpet again cover the earth, or the air, the earth, and the waters swarm with animal life. And when we should witness the ten thousand forms of vegetable and animal existence, which the genial influences of spring develop, it would seem almost as if a new creation had taken place. Experience, indeed, and the aid of the microscope, enable us to discover evidences of vitality, where, to common observation, nature seems bound only in icy fetters. Yet without such aids, all the developments of spring would seem to be made on the bosom of death.

Just so it is with the resurrection of the dead. Go to their burial place, and see if among the great congregation that lie side by side beneath the soil, you can discover any signs of life. You call, but there is no answer; you remove three feet of earth, but you shrink back horrified at the corruption that riots there upon all ages and all classes. Yet when the last trumpet shall sound, that whole surface shall become instinct with life, and corruption shall put on incorruption. Go if you will, and traverse the ten thousand battle-fields, that have been the vast slaughtering places of man, from Nimrod to Buonaparte; and all is silence and solitude over the graves of these millions. But how changed the scene on the resurrection morning! Then not less than one

thousand millions of human beings shall start up from these battle fields, and crowd upwards to the judgment seat. What vast multitudes too, shall ascend from the site of such ancient cities as Nineveh, and Babylon, and Thebes, and Palmyra, and a hundred other great centres of population, now the seat of solitude and desolation! Think of Jerusalem, which for more than two thousand years has been the great central slaughter house of the world; where human relics and comminuted dwellings have accumulated on the surface to the depth of forty or fifty feet, and the whole has been soaked a thousand times with blood. Oh think of the scene, when the millions that lie buried there, shall start into life at the shout of the descending Judge and the archangel's voice! From the sea's broad surface, too, what multitudes shall be seen ascending to be judged according to the deeds done in the body! Indeed, when we remember that probably as many as 'ten billions of human beings have already dwelt upon this globe, reasonably may we inquire, from what portion of its surface, will not myriads start into life at the final summons?'

¹ A Reviewer (in the 'Christian Examiner') has endeavoured to throw ridicule upon this passage. But I do not judge that I need be very sensitive to his shafts, so long as they must strike the language of the Bible, if they do mine. For that Book confessedly represents men as rising from their graves (John, v, 28, 29) at the resurrection; and I have done no more. It may be only the minutest atom of the body laid in the grave that will ascend: but that is sufficient to justify my

2. In the second place, spring presents us with marvellous developments of structure and changes of condition in the organic world.

As we look abroad over the unfolding landscape of spring, how should we be struck with the contrast, could all the seeds producing the vegetation of that landscape, be laid before us! Who, by looking at the seed, could once in a thousand times predict the character of the plant that would spring from it; or trace out any analogy between them? That such an analogy exists, I admit; but vernal developments can alone show us what it is; and we are often amazed and delighted by these developments. And the wonder rises higher as our instruments of examination are more perfect. There is, indeed, more simplicity of structure in the vegetable than the animal frame. But the organs are minute and complicated enough in the former, to set at defiance the powers of the microscope; or rather, there are wonders in the vegetable structure, which lie beyond the reach of that instrument. And yet, how easily are they all unfolded when spring applies to the vegetable world her transmuting touch!

description; certainly in an impassioned address. If a man believes that there is no resurrection at the end of the world, but that it takes place at every one's death, such descriptions doubtless seem visionary to him. But it must be remembered that I was addressing such as believe, like myself, in a general resurrection of the body.

But the changes among animals which spring develops, are still more striking and analogous to those of the future resurrection. At that time, many of the animals that have lain during the winter months in a state of torpidity, hardly to be distinguished from death, begin to show signs of returning vitality, and soon assume the whole activity of their natures, and enter upon a new scene of enjoyment. Many too, not entirely torpid, pass through transformations which bring them into states of existence so different from all former ones, that it must seem to them almost a new creation. Indeed, almost up to the present time, they have been regarded by the ablest naturalists as different species of animals, and even as belonging to different classes in their different states. In fact, could they answer the question themselves, they would probably testify that their experience in one state is totally diverse from their experience in every other state. I refer to those cases which the naturalists denominate alternate reproduction: in some of these cases the whole series of transformations is not completed till the eighth or ninth generation: that is, it is only in the eighth or ninth generation that the perfect animal is produced. It is in the spring, also, for the most part, that we witness what has long been thought an illustration of this subject; I mean the metamorphosis of insects. Enveloped in his silken shroud, the

chrysalis has passed the winter months in some obscure spot. But in the vernal season it bursts from its prison, endowed with new life and beauty. It entered its narrow tomb an unsightly worm; but it comes forth a perfect insect, with splendid colours and strong wings, to pass through a season of great activity and apparently of high enjoyment.

Now so striking is the analogy between these metamorphoses and the reanimation of man, that many able writers on natural theology have considered them as direct proof of his future resurrection. But unfortunately there is one defect in the analogy, that seems to have been overlooked. When man is laid in the grave, we know that no vestige of life remains. We may inflict whatever injury we please upon the dead body, but it will exhibit no signs of sensibility. Not so with the chrysalis. In its most torpid state, you can always find marks of vitality, or rather, if you cannot discover signs of life, it will never come forth as a perfect insect. The conclusion, therefore, is, that the curious facts respecting insect metamorphosis, although a beautiful emblem of man's resurrection, are but a poor argument in direct proof of the doctrine. They do, however, show us in what widely different states the same animals may exist, and what curious means nature has provided, by which they may pass from one of

those states into another, not only unharmed, but with higher developments of beauty and richer means of enjoyment; all this, I say, does afford a strong presumption that the change of death may pass upon man with no other effect upon his interior nature, than to fit it to unfold in higher perfection in eternity.

And every thing in religion and philosophy indicates that man will come forth from the grave with a body vastly better adapted for the exercise of his mental and moral powers than his present organization. Indeed, wonderful as that organization is, both Scripture and experience testify, that in this world, because it is a state of sin and death, the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together. In this tabernacle man's spirit groans, being burdened, and God meant it to be in a fettered and in many respects an uncongenial state, in order that it might wait with earnest expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God; in other words, for the adoption, which the apostle declares to be, the redemption of the body. Here, it is a natural body; there, it will be spiritual: sown in dishonour in the grave, but raised in glory. We have shown how wide the difference may be between the natural and the spiritual body, consistently with the scriptural representations: and doubtless the changes that will be undergone, will far transcend our present

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conceptions. Here, it is mortal; there, immortal: here, gross, and the seat of gross appetites; there, ethereal and free from every taint of sense or sin: here, the seat of pain: there, invulnerable to violence, disorganization, and disease. Oh, what wonders will such a body contain; and how will its study force from us, with far deeper emphasis than it was ever uttered in this world, the exclamation, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made!"

3. *In the third place, in the spring hope changes into fruition.*

During the long winter months of high latitudes, how often do men sigh after the return of spring! Having had so long experience of the certain revolutions of the seasons, their expectation of spring's return, to scatter the snows, unlock the streams, mantle the earth with a green carpet, and cover the vegetable world with flowers of every form and hue, and make the air, earth, and waters, again to teem with life and motion; this expectation, I say, is almost too strong to be called hope. And yet it may fail. We know not when the last vernal season may come: for of that "day knoweth no man, but the Father only." But when we are actually rioting in the midst of vernal glories, we feel that all is a rejoicing reality. Every doubt and fear have departed, and the fruition is richer than the anticipation.

As the Christian turns his thought and his eyes to the place of the dead, he also hopes and longs for the day when all that sleeping dust shall be reanimated, and the grave shall give up its charge. And yet, when faith is weak, how often do desponding doubts and fears come over his mind! Oh, could he hear that voice, which once said, "Lazarus, come forth!" in like manner summon all the countless millions of earth from their long sleep, what a glorious realization of fond hopes would he experience! And ere long he shall hear it, and his hopes be changed into vision. O, what a change, and what a vision! And to know, too, that his own body, on earth so frail, and it may be so full of pain and infirmity, shall then come forth purified, etherial, incorruptible, and adapted to be the residence of the sinless and immortal spirit, how delightful the anticipation!

Take for an example the long tried and desponding invalid. Year after year, and decade after decade, it may be, his frail system has battled manfully with the insidious workings of disease. Those in vigorous health regard the most of his complaints perhaps as imaginary, and suppose they might easily be thrown off by vigorous effort; or at the most, they look upon him with silent pity. But the feverish pulse, the aching head, the failing strength, the desponding spirits, and the enfeebled mind, too

surely teach him that disease is gaining strength, and must ere long be conqueror. He tries all that the strictest rules of hygiene can do, to restore the wasting energies; and sometimes hope cheers him for a little while with the sweet vision of renovated health; but a deeper darkness succeeds, and each successive alternation of hope and despondency gives to the latter more and more of a predominance. At length, if his heart has felt the transforming power of the Gospel, his thoughts turn with a deepening interest to that world where the inhabitant will not say, I am sick; and the hope of a resurrection of his now diseased and suffering body to immortal health and vigour, sends a thrill of delightful anticipation through his sinking heart. Much as he has suffered in his present body, he still feels for it a strong attachment; especially when he reflects how wonderfully it has held out under the assaults of disease; and it is a delightful thought, that it shall one day be restored to him, transformed indeed gloriously, but retaining its identity, and, having become invulnerable to all created power, shall be his eternal and happy dwelling place. Oh, animating hope! And it is eminently the invalid's hope; for how little do they know of its mighty power, whose pulse of health always beats strong, and whose spirits are always buoyant and happy!

4. *In the fourth place, spring opens upon us*

brighter displays of Divine Power, Wisdom, and Goodness.

Every season has, indeed, its peculiar exhibitions of these attributes. But in the winter months, they are chiefly manifestations of inorganic laws. Chemistry is at work, with its curious transmutations and molecular forces, to convert water into splendid and most useful forms of crystallization; mantling the earth with snow and ice, and thus guarding organic beings from the loss of vital heat. But after all, it is when organic nature is most fully developed, that we are most impressed by the Divine wisdom and power. Indeed, the germination and growth of an animal or plant, such as we witness in the spring, are most wonderful processes; and were they not so common, they would be as impressive as miracles. And really, what is it but the direct power of God, that produces these astonishing effects? True, we speak of the laws by which vegetables and animals are made to grow and flourish. But this is only saying that God works according to fixed rules; for what is a law without the efficient agency of the lawgiver? Why not at once ascribe to Divine Power the developments of organic life, which that Power can alone produce, and thus follow the example of the sacred writers, who seem as much impressed by the ordinary as by the extraordinary movements of nature, and see the

hand of God in the one as distinctly as in the other. In like manner, when spring opens upon us unnumbered examples of expanding organisms, we should look upon them all as the direct fruits of Divine Power and Wisdom, and rejoice in them as indications of Divine Goodness.

And just so when the winter of the grave is past, and spring shall visit the mouldering urn, and the spiritual shall replace the natural body, how astonishing, have we reason to suppose, will be the manifestations of these Divine attributes which that new condition will present! If in this world, so marred by sin, the organism is full of wonders, what shall be its marvellousness, when an organization exists adapted to a sinless and immortal state, to the free exercise of the intellectual and moral powers, and to ever advancing holiness and happiness! The Scriptures allow us to give our imagination free scope, in attempting to conceive of the splendours of that state: for they seize upon the most brilliant scenes of time to set forth its external glories.

5. *In the fifth place, the animating scenes of spring inspire the expectation of yet richer developments of organic nature.*

To see the expanding bud, the opening flower, and the green fields, and to drink in the balmy breezes loaded with refreshing odours, is indeed most animating and delightful. But a part of

the pleasure arises from the confident expectation that the fresh beauties of spring shall ripen into the more enduring glories of summer, and the mellow fruits of autumn. The latter, indeed, we confidently expect as a consequence of the former, and therefore, as they come on, we are less impressed by their novelty. But let them cease to follow at the expected time, and we should find that beautiful as were the blossoms of spring, they could not compare in intrinsic importance with the more substantial developments of summer and autumn.

When the spring time of the resurrection shall arrive, and man finds himself united to his spiritual body, he will no doubt be amazed and delighted by the novelty and splendour of "his house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." I know not what will be the anatomy and physiology of the spiritual body. But since it is adapted to a far higher state of existence, can we doubt that in structure and function it will equally transcend the natural body? It may not possess such senses as we now employ; but there must be means of receiving knowledge, far more delicate, certain, and rapid, than we now enjoy. Then too, the spiritual body must be possessed of an activity incapable of fatigue, and eminently fitted for abstraction. The memory may be expected to retain without effort, every impression made upon it. The

organization must likewise be so exquisite, as never to mislead, or allure from duty. All the powers, indeed, of body and mind, must be in perfect harmony, and never know any of those conflicts which in this world so cloud the intellect, pervert the will, and estrange the affections from holiness and God.

But though the soul, when it first enters such a body, will experience intense delight, yet it will doubtless soon discover that still richer developments are in reserve for it: for we have every reason to suppose, both from the nature of the soul, and the whole analogy of the world; that everlasting progress and development are the destiny of the glorified spirit; and that the grand means of such progress will be the exercise of all the powers, corporeal, mental, and moral. Nay, where is the objection to the supposition, that the glorified spirit may pass successively into higher and higher conditions of being, by means of changes as great, it may be, as those that conduct it from this world into another; yet not of such a nature as implies the least amount of suffering. For even what we call death, might be made a transition delightful in prospect and in experience.

It is reasonable then to suppose, that the enchanting scenes of the spring time of future existence will be only an earnest of richer glories, which can be seen in bright perspective, along

the pathway of the whole immortal existence, and that as the soul advances on that path, the vision will become wider and more magnificent for ever and ever.

6. *Finally, spring restores to us many well remembered forms of vegetable and animal life.*

When the frosts of autumn came on, it was saddening to see how many familiar forms of the vegetable world, to which we had become attached, were yielding up their foliage; and though they descended to the grave in a gaudy dress, we could not but feel that we were losing the society of friends. Then too, the song of birds ceased in the fields and the woods, or they uttered only a few solitary and farewell notes, as they withdrew to their southern retreats. In like manner, nearly all other voices of the animal world soon ceased, and, during the long months of winter, it was the analogy of nature only that inspired the expectation of ever again beholding forms that seemed to have disappeared for ever. Yet with the opening spring they have come back: in a new dress indeed, but still identically the same, and awakening delightful reminiscences and anticipations. Some of them have been concealed among us and subjected to the stern power of winter: and others have fled far away to escape his withering blasts. But they have reappeared, as fresh and lovely as ever; yea more so: nor can we perceive that one

feature is gone, or changed, save that the fresher charms of youth are upon them. Every spire of grass is developed with the same form, and colour, and position, as its progenitors, so that the *Festuca* is at once known from the *Poa* and *Agrostis*, and the *Dactylis* from the *Phleum*. The *Anemones* and the *Violets*, the *Gnaphalium*, the *Trifolium*, the *Leontodon*, the *Hepatica*, and the *Trillium*, have been restored without the loss of a single tint of colouring, or change in the form of their leaves, their stems, or their flowers. The oak also, and the maple, the elm and the poplar, the willow and the birch, the *Cornus* and the *Pyrus*, the pine and the spruce, and a thousand other species of trees and shrubs, put forth the same peculiar leaves and flowers, and take the same specific shapes and colours, which they have had since first they rose out of the earth at the Divine Command. The same familiar voices meet us too, from the fields and the groves. At the earliest dawn, the robin's cheerful song is heard, with the clear rich note of the lark, the soft tone of the bluebird, the twitter of the swallow, the cooing of the dove, the clear and cheerful voice of the blackbird, and the hoarse yet welcome garrulity of the crow. In short, wherever we turn our eyes, or whenever we open our ears, forms and sounds of vegetable and animal life meet us in almost endless profusion, yet familiar to us from our earliest

days ; and most of them dear to us, not only because of their inherent beauty and loveliness, but because they are associated with the most cherished recollections of our lives. When we look back upon life, we see much that is painful, because marred by sin. But natural objects are always remembered with pleasure, because they wear the freshness and the innocence of Paradise. During the stern reign of winter we often sighed for the return of the foliage and the flowers, and the countless voices of gladness, which burst forth from all nature in the vernal season. And now the desire is gratified, and while the soft and healthful breezes fan us, the smile and the song of nature make us almost forget for a time that we are in a world of sin and suffering.

How delightful now to be able to say, thus shall it be with the resurrection of the dead ! Then, indeed, shall the grave deliver up a multitude of well remembered and endeared forms, which in sadness we committed to its charge. In another part of this discourse I have endeavoured to show, that the spiritual body will possess a specific and individual identity. Now what is it that enables us in the spring to recognize the plants and animals emerging from the grave of winter, as the same in kind with those that flourished in the previous year ? It is simply by their specific identity, which has been

preserved through all the changes and rigours of winter. Just so does the Bible describe the specific character of man, and by parity of reason that of individuals, as being unharmed by the mechanical and chemical changes consequent upon death. We may expect, therefore, to be able at the resurrection, to distinguish those whom we have known on earth, as readily as we do the plants and animals of spring. It is strange, indeed, apart from this doctrine of the preservation of specific identity, how theologians could ever have doubted whether men would be able to recognize one another in the eternal world: for they all admit that memory will remain, and some means of intercommunication be possessed, at least as certain as on earth. How then could individuals be prevented from learning to recognize one another, even though every evidence of corporeal identity be lost? But when the apostle says, that "God giveth to every seed his own body," and that so it will be with the resurrection of the dead, every naturalist feels sure that there will exist also, such marks of identity between the natural and the spiritual body, as will enable those familiar with the one, to recognize the other. I pretend not, indeed, to describe how that specific identity can be preserved, amid the decompositions of the grave; especially when I know that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

But I do know, that the specific characteristics of plants and animals are maintained in this world under changes perhaps equally great: and when Jehovah declares, that so it shall be in the resurrection of the dead, I joyfully acquiesce in the doctrine, because I know that infinite power can accomplish that which infinite wisdom determines.

I come, then, my hearers, with my heart full of this consoling doctrine, to pour it into the bosoms of the afflicted. And who of us have not sometimes been afflicted in the removal of those whose forms and features have been ever since remembered with the deepest interest. We have called in the aid, it may be, of painting and photography, to embalm their features, and the expression which the workings of the soul within gave to the countenance. And how deep was our anguish, when we last looked upon them, although death had marred their countenances, as we saw the grave closing over their remains. But if the doctrine of this discourse be true, and if they were the true disciples of Christ, they shall be restored to us in the resurrection morning, and we shall recognize them amid the millions, who then awake from the grave, as we now recognize the plants and animals of spring. There shall be a characteristic something in their spiritual bodies, that will lead us at once, and with exulting joy, to fly

to their embrace. Fathers and mothers, who have been called to yield to the demands of death a darling and pious child, while yet the dew and the beauty of youth were fresh upon him, go forth at the shout of the archangel, and you shall find that child, glowing, indeed, with celestial beauty and glory, yet retaining something of that same expression which has stamped his image so deeply on your heart. And thou disconsolate man, from whom death has taken the wife of your youth, go thou forth at the same signal, and you shall at once distinguish her too, amid ascending millions, and become her everlasting companion, in that world where they "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." The lonely widow too, let her come, and she shall recognize that countenance, which a noble soul and generous affection have made indelible on her heart, as once her husband and protector, nor shall any power be able again to tear him from her side; but the holy joys of eternity shall be doubly sweet, because enjoyed together. Children of beloved Christian parents, come ye, also, and rush again into the embrace of those who gave you being, and who trained you up for heaven, and they shall take you by the hand, and still be your guides and companions amid the wonders of the New Jerusalem. There likewise shall the brother, from whom death has torn an

affectionate brother or sister, and the sister, who has often wept over a departed brother or sister, find them again, radiant with heavenly glory, yet retaining the traces of their earthly character. And whatever Christian weeps over the memory of a Christian friend, let him wipe away his tears, and prepare to meet that friend, when the graves have given up their dead, with a body like unto Christ's, yet fashioned so as to make it only a transmuted and glorified natural body, recognized by one of those golden links that bind the natural to the spiritual, the mortal to the immortal. O, blessed season of recognition and joy begun ! How will it wipe away in a moment every Christian mourner's tears, and restore to him his departed friends, and bring them all together in the presence of their common Lord, to enjoy his smiles, and the delightful intercourse of one another, with no fear of disastrous change or separation for ever and ever. Surrounded as we are, my Christian friends, by the resurrections of spring, let us look upon the thousand forms of life and beauty that meet us from day to day, as symbolizations of that nobler resurrection, when forms a thousand times dearer shall start into life from a deeper winter, and put on a verdure that will never decay, and a glory that will never fade. O, that this bright hope might stimulate us so to live and to labour, that not only ourselves,

but all whom we love on earth, shall come forth at the resurrection of the just, purified from the stains and sins of earth, and ripe for the perfect holiness and happiness of heaven !

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TRIUMPHAL ARCH OF SUMMER.

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THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH OF SUMMER.

"And God spake unto Noah and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you: And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood: neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." Genesis, ix, 8-16.

IT does not follow from this description, that the rainbow had no existence before the deluge, but only that God appealed to it upon the subsidence of the waters, as a token or sign of the promise or covenant he then made with the earth. Whenever that sign should appear in the cloud, it would be a pledge that the

constancy of nature was not again to be interrupted in order to deluge the earth.

Every one has observed and delighted in the tranquillizing influence of striking scenes in nature. Let a man's nerves be ever so much rasped and irritated by the collisions and perplexities of life, how quickly will they be soothed, if some splendid landscape bursts at once upon his sight; if a meteor rushes across the heavens; or the northern aurora decorates the sky; if the thunder cloud rises slowly and majestically, or the sun emerges after a storm, and paints a rainbow upon the retiring darkness. It is as if, while thus excited and ruffled, he were to attempt to perform a piece of music, or were to listen to one "who has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument." He could not sing, and with difficulty could he hear music well executed, without becoming tranquil. And there is a music in the striking scenes of nature still more potent, which exerts a magic power to soothe the agitated, and cheer the desponding heart.

But such an effect is not the highest and most important influence which we should seek from natural phenomena. They teach many a moral lesson with great clearness and force; and the religious man should ever desire to secure this most needed benefit from every thing beautiful and sublime in nature.

You will see by my text, that my object on this occasion, is, to call your attention to one of the most splendid and not unfrequent spectacles, which crown the balmy season of summer. I would point out those religious truths, which the rainbow, by fair analogy, illustrates and impresses.

In the first place, the text shows us that the rainbow is a token, or pledge of God's fidelity to his word.

In order to appreciate the value of this pledge to Noah and his family and his immediate successors, we need only place ourselves in their circumstances. The constancy of nature had been broken in upon, and a frightful catastrophe had followed, involving the whole world in destruction, save a single family. That family had seen a rain commence, as any other rain; yet it ceased not for forty days; and then too, the ocean came rolling in its giant waves upon the land, engulfing, in awful ruin, the unbelieving world, and sparing only those, who, trusting in God's word, had prepared an ark and were borne upwards by the swelling flood. As they saw multitudes struggle in vain against the waters, and their dead bodies at length strewed over the universal flood, how deeply must they have been impressed with the powerlessness of man when God rises up in anger, and how easy for him to turn all nature into a chaos.

in the execution of vindictive justice upon the guilty. The inquiry, therefore, must have been one of deep interest to those survivors and their descendants, to whom, for several generations, the story of the deluge would be told with the vividness of a present reality: whether they might not expect other special interpositions of Divine Power, arresting the ordinary operations of nature, whenever the guilty deserved punishment. And doubtless they felt as if their own conduct deserved from Infinite Holiness, a repetition of the terrible infliction. How cheering then to hear God say, "I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood. I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake: for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." O, with what intense anxiety must these survivors, after leaving the ark, have watched the clouds, to see if

the promised sign should appear! and what exultation must have swelled their bosoms, as they saw the many coloured arch spanning the heavens and quelling their fears, and inspiring confidence in God, and gratitude towards him. No wonder that the rainbow, as well as every other circumstance connected with the deluge, should have entered so largely into the mythological systems of heathen antiquity, and that the bow should have been personified in the goddess Iris.

It did not require many generations to pass, before men lost their deep moral interest in the rainbow: for the long continued constancy of nature dissipated their fears of its interruption: and at this day, how few, as they look upon this phenomenon, remember at all that it is the token of that only covenant, which ensures the constancy of nature's operations! But that pledge is indeed our only security. We do not learn, either from philosophy or revelation, that God might not as certainly and successfully have governed the world by special interposition, as by fixed laws. Indeed, special interposition might have been easily made the law, and uniformity the exception. But how disastrous would such a state of things have been to the human family! Suppose that every time we saw the clouds rising, we were to anticipate a penal deluge; or every time the thunder and

lightning played, we were to expect some signal manifestation of God's displeasure towards the guilty: and who is not conscious enough of guilt to feel that he deserves the stroke? Still more painful must have been our apprehensions, when the comet's train was in the heavens, or the aurora borealis was flashing up from the horizon, or the sun and moon were suffering eclipse! The heathen, and those extremely ignorant, have these fears to some extent: and we know how miserable it makes them. "Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven: for the heathen are dismayed at them." Let us then, remember with gratitude, as we look upon the bow¹ of summer, that it is our only pledge against an insecurity and uncertainty in nature, that would convert the world into a torturing house, where conscience would act as inquisitor.

But this is not all. For if the rainbow is the token of God's covenant with the material universe, it is also, by parity of reason, a pledge of the fulfilment of all his promises, and all his threatenings. For the last four thousand years, God has not failed of the promise that seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease. Why should we doubt any more that he will show the same fidelity to all the promises: and

O, how rich and abundant they are, to those who are faithful in his service! "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" "God," says the apostle, "willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." And in another place, the same apostle, speaking of Christ, says, "For all the promises of God in him, are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God, by us." Truly we may add the inference which he makes on this subject, from another train of reasoning: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

But I need not make this point a matter of inference from the promises of God in general: for he has expressly compared his covenant with Noah, to that made with his people. "This," says he, "is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither

shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." How strong this language! It does not say that God's covenant with his people is as firm as that with the material universe as ratified by the rainbow. But it goes farther, and declares that even though the latter be broken, so that the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, yet his promises to his people shall nevertheless abide, and they need not fear amid a dissolving universe.

As the Christian, then, looks upon the bow of summer spanning the arch of heaven, what a lesson of trust in God does it teach him! Only one half hour before, perhaps, he was surrounded by blackness and darkness and tempest; and no sign in nature indicated a cessation of the wild commotion of the elements. But how soon was the change accomplished, that brought back the light, and hushed the winds, and made beauty and glory almost unearthly succeed the elemental war! And that bow which crowns the whole scene, tells the Christian, that with like ease can God make the storms of affliction and trial, and the furious onsets of temptation, and the darkness of despondency, pass away, and peace and hope revisit the trembling heart, and fill it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In the darkest hour, therefore, let the believer cling to the promises of God and fear

no evil, and wait in assured hope for his arm to clear the darkest skies, and forget not, that though "weeping may continue for a night, joy cometh in the morning."

But God has promulgated threatenings as well as promises: His holy law has penalties as well as rewards: penalties of deep and terrible import, whose announcement is couched in language and metaphors the most terrific which the vocabulary and the rhetoric of man can command. And it is declared of these too, that "though heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." What infatuation, then, for man to fancy that these threatenings will not be executed! How should any one presuming to entertain such fancies be rebuked, as he looks upon the rainbow, and is there reminded that in nothing else has God failed to be as good as his word. Beautiful, then, as the bow of heaven is, it speaks only terror and denunciation to the unhumbled sinner.

The Hindoo mythology teaches that there is a certain fluid prepared by the gods, called the Amreetta, or drink of immortality, which confers eternal life upon all that taste it. But to the pious man, along with immortality, it brings happiness without measure and without end: while in the wicked, it works everlasting agony. So if the rainbow were viewed aright, it would

awaken confidence and joy in the pious heart, but fear and distress in the wicked. And if such are not its opposite effects, it is because men regard not its original dedication, as a witness of God's faithfulness to his declarations.

In the second place, the rainbow is an emblem of the covenant of redemption.

I might have mentioned this fact without impropriety, under the first head. But there are some peculiarities of resemblance, which make a separate notice more appropriate.

When the law was proclaimed on Sinai, the mountain was covered with a thick cloud, from which issued the thunderings and the lightnings and the loud trumpet; but there was no bow upon that cloud. All was suited to a dispensation, whose unyielding demand was, "This do, and thou shalt live." "Whosoever keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, he is guilty of all." But when the Gospel was proclaimed, it painted a bow of promise upon that cloud; not by dissipating the cloud, or robbing it of its thunders, but only turning them upon the head of a Substitute, and inviting the guilty and the lost to take shelter beneath the cross.

We speak of the rainbow as painted upon the clouds. But who has not seen its arch creep downward upon the mountain's side, and taking hold of the forest, seem to unite the

stormy cloud above to the quiet earth beneath? In like manner, how beautifully does the covenant of redemption link, by a golden chain, heaven to earth, and earth to heaven. The cloud of Divine Justice still hangs above our heads, and the lightning is sometimes seen playing upon its face. But the bow of mercy smiles upon the darkness, and whispers peace and security to the humble believer. With argument irresistible, and confidence unshaken, he exclaims, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also, freely give us all things?" "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?"

In the third place, the rainbow is an apt emblem of union and harmony in the midst of diversity.

The beam of light that comes to us from the sun, is homogeneous and apparently simple. But let it pass through the prism, or the drop of rain, and it develops the colours that form the rainbow. Apply the thermometer, and you will find also in that beam, invisible rays, producing the phenomena of heat. Subject the photographic plate to the same beam, and you will find other invisible rays, that shall realize the ancient fancy of the painter, who dipped his pencil in the sun. Now all these rays, so diverse in colour and effect, are harmoniously blended

in the rainbow. And who fancies any want of congruity and harmony? Take away any one of them indeed, and you despoil the bow of its perfection. A single colour painted upon the clouds, would excite comparatively little interest. But when the seven are blended in the magnificent arch, you feel how wonderful is the power of nature to unite and harmonize things so diverse; and in the midst of ten thousand differences, to exhibit perfect union and proportion.

The beam of truth that comes to us, either through the volume of nature or revelation, is homogeneous and pure. But passing through the various separating media of different intellects, of education, of prejudice, and various systems of philosophy, it is divided into rays of many colours. And usually men do not recognize their common origin, nor imagine that they can be made to harmonize. Some of these rays are, indeed, lost, and most of them are obscured, by the perverting influence of the medium through which they pass. But whenever the different denominations of Christendom unite upon any great object of benevolence, they show that the light which they emit, had a divine original; and though of different shades, it may all be blended into an arch of light, that shall spread glory over the darkness of this world, and become an omen of hope for the future. They learn, that so long as they see evidence that the light which is

thrown out from any denomination had a divine origin, they need not fear that it will blast, but they may hope it will bless, the nations, although diverse in appearance from their own; and that in fact, the different coloured rays may blend in harmony. They will find too, that there are invisible rays, calorific rays, unequally diffused, perhaps, as in the spectrum, among the different colorific rays; yet spreading a genial warmth through the whole. And they will find other invisible rays, whose magic power shall paint Christianity, as thus exhibited, in a juster and fairer light before the world, than she has ever yet assumed.

Beautiful, however, as the natural rainbow is, it lacks one thing essential to the perfection of its beauty. As seen in the heavens, by an eye on earth, it can never form but a portion of a circle. Yet when you stand upon the brink of the cataract of Niagara, in favourable circumstances, you may see that circle completed upon the spray. And then will you feel, what probably you never thought of before, how much more glorious the bow upon the clouds would be, could it be presented as an unending curve.

In like manner, the union of different denominations of Christians, so fitly represented by the colours of the rainbow, never yet has been, and I fear never will be, perhaps, I might say, never can be, on earth, any thing but a broken

circle. But when from every nation, every denomination, and every communion, they shall be assembled around the throne of their common Lord on Mount Zion above, the circle shall be completed, and the full glories of Christian love, marred and obscured on earth, shall shine forth in all their brightness, and excite the admiration of all heaven, and become the Redeemer's diadem.

In the fourth place, the rainbow aptly represents man's present state of probation and discipline.

When we see the tempest rising and hear the winds whistling; and see the billowy clouds wheeling and mixing in wild commotion, while ever and anon from their dark folds, flashes out the lightning, and the startling thunder comes pealing after, while the riven tree or the blazing habitation attests the power of the electric discharges: such a scene may and must interest us by its sublimity. But it wears too much the aspect of terror to make its long continuance desired. Yet when the fury of the storm is passed, and the wild wind is lulled, and the forked lightning plays only at a distance, and the sun begins to look out again from behind the retiring cloud, we view the scene with lively emotions of pleasure; and when at length the rainbow is seen spanning the storm, and nature smiles in morning freshness, we rejoice in the contrast, and do not regret the violence of the

tempest, nor its dangers, if such a scene of lovelessness is permitted to follow.

No less in contrast are the scenes which man's probationary state in this world presents. It is, indeed, full of enigmas, too deep for human philosophy to solve. The author of the book of Ecclesiastes has left us the result of his observations and reflections upon the checkered state of things, which society exhibits. "I returned," says he, "and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." This is blank atheism. But others among the ancients, as they observed the condition of the world, saw in it such a strange mixture of retributive justice and benevolence, as to regard it as a state of rewards and punishments. This was the view entertained by Job's comforters, who argued against him on such a basis; and the view was not uncommon among the heathen. Even in modern times, this checkered aspect of human society and individual experience, has perplexed and confounded many, who have not drank deeply into the spirit of revelation. Aside from that fountain of truth, it is not, indeed, strange, that men should be confounded by what they witness. When they see whole cities and districts suddenly overturned by the earthquake

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or the volcano, or deluged by water; when the tornado spreads desolation over fertile regions; when the pestilence moves in terror over the land; when famine and war convert regions, populous and fertile, into uninhabited deserts; and when in individual experience the best laid plans prove abortive, and misfortune and sickness paralyze the vigorous frame, it does seem as if the arm of God's punitive justice were laid bare, and as if he were giving painful exhibitions of his hatred of sin. The world, indeed, seems covered with the cloud of Divine vengeance, and we see the lightnings flash from it, and the winds and the floods rushing with fury from its caverns. And yet the destruction falls on the just as well as the unjust, the innocent as well as the guilty, and we wonder why Infinite Wisdom and Justice do not make a distinction.

On the other hand, when none of these terrific messengers of wrath are abroad, and we go forth to survey the world, we find a thousand tokens of benevolence smiling upon us on the face of society. Over vast regions waves the olive of peace, and happy millions sit under their own vines and fig trees, "with none to molest or make them afraid." The gory battle-field waves with golden grain; new cities and towns are springing up on the ruins of those buried by the earthquake, the volcano, or the flood; science and art unite to multiply the comforts and

elegancies of life; multitudes are rising from the degradation of ignorance and superstition; the chains of the oppressor are snapping asunder, and we hear the shout of freedom from disenthralled millions. And when we descend to the examination of individuals, we find peace and prosperity, health and happiness, to be the law; and suffering, poverty, sickness, and misery, to be the exception. If the former view brought before us the cloud of Divine Justice with its lightning and thunder, the latter spreads over it a bow of hope and promise. It is the voice of nature, telling us in language not to be mistaken, that if the world does exhibit, here and there, evidences of God's displeasure against sin, if we do see marks of a fallen condition of the human family, still it is not a condition without hope. Bright rays of mercy are smiling upon its darkness, speaking in gentle tones of Divine forgiveness to the penitent. Nature, indeed, with a thousand tongues, tells us that it is a world of probation and discipline; a mere preparatory state for a final and far more exalted condition. And this voice solves satisfactorily the enigma of this world, and justifies the ways of God to man, and brings back peace and hope into the bosom of dejection, doubt, and despair.

In the fifth place, the rainbow is a striking emblem of human hopes.

Although the laws by which the rainbow is

produced, are every where the same, yet it presents itself to our view in two quite different circumstances. In the one case it precedes, and in the other, it follows the storm. When it appears at the rising of the sun, it is painted upon the approaching storm, and when at the setting sun, upon the retiring storm. Hence the morning bow presages the storm, and the evening bow gives promise of a subsequent day with a clear sky and an invigorating atmosphere; or as the homely proverb has it,

“A bow in the morning:
Let sailors take warning:
A rainbow at night
Is the sailor’s delight.”

Now the morning bow aptly represents those human hopes that are destined to end in disappointment and defeat. And these hopes are for the most part such as are inspired in the morning of life. At that period, when the sun of life is just above the horizon, the clouds of care and suffering have not yet cast a shadow over its brightness, and its rays throw a deceitful splendour over the future. Then too, the bow of promise smiles so sweetly, as to lure on the inexperienced youth, and inspire hopes that can never be realized. He has not yet learned that this bow of promise, like the rainbow, is painted upon a rising storm, and owes its brilliancy to

the storm. He is amazed, therefore, and disheartened, when he sees the clouds begin to rise, and the sun passes behind them, and the bow fades away, and the storms of misfortune commence. It is well in such circumstances if he does not utterly despair, and give over his efforts after future good. Some do thus yield to the power of adversity. But others nobly breast the storm, and trust that when its fury is spent, the sun will re-appear, and new and better hopes shall not only spring up, but be realized; if not in this world, yet in another, far brighter and nobler. And to produce such a state of feeling and action, is precisely the object God has in view in thus blasting earthly hopes.

The morning bow, however, does aptly symbolize some human hopes that extend into eternity. If not built upon the right foundation, those hopes, however confident, will never be fulfilled. Nay, worse than this: they will end in a storm that will know no mitigation and no end. Every hope will thus terminate that is not founded on Jesus Christ and him crucified; every hope that does not begin with "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;" every hope that rests on external rites in religion, or on mere worldly morality, or on fitful frames instead of a deep seated abiding principle of piety, love to God and love to man. Oh, how painful to think how many hopes are

indulged among nominal Christians, that will prove like the spider's web, or like the giving up of the ghost! With comparative composure can we see earthly hopes crushed, and those who entertained them standing desolate and disconsolate: for that very desolation may lead them to secure hopes that shall prove "an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast," in the final conflict of nature. But how overwhelming the thought, that when a man stands on the brink of life, and a hope of heaven is the only support which can buoy him up amid the angry waters, Oh, to find that this is a delusion, and like a mill stone will drag him to the bottom, who, who, can contemplate without anguish his condition! And yet you and I, my Christian brother, may find that condition to be our own.

Contemplate now the rainbow of the evening, or rather of the setting sun, and you have a beautiful emblem of hopes, temporal and eternal, that are true and will become reality. And a striking difference between these hopes and such as will perish, lies in the fact, that they follow, instead of preceding, the storms of life. After the clouds and the darkness, and it may be the tempests, of affliction and disappointment have passed by, God impresses upon those who have endured them, the tokens of his approbation and favour, and gives them a bright earnest of happier days; it may be on earth, but assuredly in

heaven. Bravely and patiently have they stood at the post of duty, when the winds and the storm beat upon them, resolving to trust in Jehovah, though he slew them; and now they have their reward. Thus did light and peace break in upon Job after his fiery trials; and thus have ten thousand others found that their afflictions were only necessary precursors of days of rest and happiness. And as to heavenly hopes, they are almost as necessarily preceded by storms and tempests in the moral world, as the rainbow of evening is by those in the natural world. Says Paul, "we glory in tribulation; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Christian brother, I know that your thoughts will recur in this connection to the time when your soul was first brought out of the darkness of nature into the marvellous light of the Gospel. A sense of unpardoned sin had brought a frightful cloud over your prospects for eternity, and ever and anon you saw the lightning of Sinai leaping forth from its bosom, threatening you with the instant destruction which you felt that you deserved. Your earnest cry for help was answered only by the heavy thunder of the Divine Law; and you sought in vain for any

refuge from the pelting storm. Hope died in your bosom, and despair was settling down upon your prospects, when suddenly, as if almost by miracle, the tempest lulled, the blue sky reappeared, your eye caught the bow of the everlasting covenant, the Sun of Righteousness looked through the clouds with noonday brightness, and your soul was filled with light, and love, and exulting joy, and heaven and earth with the glory of God. Oh, can you look upon the natural rainbow, and not be reminded of that amazing and triumphant hour, when you exclaimed,

“ This relief,
This change; whence are they? almost it might seem
I never liv'd till now; all else had been a dream.”

But the closing scene of the true Christian's life, as well as its commencement, is most impressively symbolized by the rainbow of evening; not to speak of that beautiful silver bow which the rays of the moon unfrequently exhibit upon the evening clouds, and which is called the Lunar Iris: a phenomenon which a man may think himself fortunate to have seen once in the course of an ordinary life; and which, moreover, does finely represent the condition of some shrinking yet amiable Christians as death approaches. But I speak now of that rich scene, which we sometimes witness at the hour of sunset, when the tempests have subsided, and

the day closes with a splendour which none can appreciate but those who have seen it. Let me refer to an example, which has not yet escaped from any of our memories.¹

The sultry and almost suffocating condition of the atmosphere in the forenoon, foreboded a thunder tempest in the afternoon. Accordingly the brazen thunder heads began to shoot up magnificently along the western horizon, resting upon dense darkness beneath. Higher and higher they mounted upwards as the sun declined, and at length he disappeared behind them, and the distant thunder began to mutter. Louder and louder did it roll along, causing the solid mountains to rock and tremble. The sharp and angry lightning too, darted from cloud to cloud, and sometimes to the earth, and nature seemed waiting in stillness for the full force of the onset. At length we heard the roar of the wind and the rain, and in a few moments, torrents of water were swept through the air, the trees reeled and bowed beneath the impulse, flash after flash of lightning in quick succession illuminated the darkened air, and an almost continued roar of thunder reminded the observer of his impotence when God unchains the elements. But ere long the fury of the tempest

¹ Exhibited June 23rd, 1848, at Amherst: also in equal splendour, on the 10th of July, 1849; as magnificent scenes as I ever witnessed in nature.

passed by, and we looked with relieved feelings upon the retiring cloud. Soon the blue sky appeared along the western horizon, the furious winds were hushed, the rain ceased, and the sun looked forth with a brighter and more joyous face, and spread a glory over the landscape unknown before. Then too, the dark retiring cloud was lighted up by the magnificent rainbow, whose double and concentric arches arrested every eye and interested every heart, not dead to nature's charms, nor insensible to the assurance thence derived, that though for a time the elements may be lashed into fury, the omnipotent God, who sits behind the elements, holds them in his fist, and will say to them, Thus far shall ye go, but no farther. Magnificent, indeed, was the scene that now spread itself before us. Along the eastern and southern horizon, the black cloud was still extended, and over its face we still saw the flickering lightning play, and we heard the thunder dying away in the distance. The purified atmosphere gave a free passage to the horizontal rays of the sun, so that the whole landscape presented an unwonted distinctness of outline and richness of colouring; and it seemed as if we could almost touch the distant mountain tops. On the south, (for I will describe the phenomena as they fell under my own eye on the 23rd of June,) the right hand extremity of the rainbow's arch reposed against the side of Mount

Norwottuck, and its left hand extremity, against Mount Lincoln, while its centre was occupied by the College Edifices, which never seemed so much honoured as when surmounted by this coronal arch placed over them by God's hand. And then what a sunset followed! As the rainbow brightened and rose higher and higher with the sinking sun, all the space within its arch assumed the aspect of embossed gold, in fine contrast with the darker shades without the circle. And yet the clouds on every side changed their form and colouring continually; and the whole scene deepened in interest till the sun sunk behind the hills; nor could the man of genuine taste turn away from the fascinating scene, till the darkness hid it from his view. And even then, he knew that such a sunset, although a dark night might follow, is a sure harbinger of a glorious morning on the subsequent day: agreeably to the beautiful lines of Dr. Watts, upon the setting sun,

“ And now the fair traveller's come to the west:
His rays are all gold, and his beauties are best;
He paints the sky gay as he sinks to his rest,
And foretells a bright rising again.”

Analogous to this, I may truly say, has been the closing scene of many an eminent and devoted Christian. His life may have been filled with trials and conflicts, and often may his

earthly hopes have been blasted. Indeed, such discipline seems almost essential to a full preparation for a triumphant departure to a brighter world. But when the storms of life swept over him, and darkness enshrouded him, faith still kept her firm hold of the Divine Promise, and felt confident that the tempest and the darkness would at length give place to the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings. And now that blessed time has arrived. The bow of Christian hope spans the receding darkness, and the sweet light of eternal glory comes in through the gloom of the grave. The tempests of human passion are hushed, and no wave ruffles the ocean of eternity, whose quiet surface invites the soul to launch forth. As the Christian looks backward, the bow of the everlasting covenant between God and his soul shuts out from his view his past sins and sorrows, and he feels sure they can follow him no farther. And as he looks forward, so bright is the light of eternal glory that shoots down the dark valley and shadow of death, that it lights up all the scene with unearthly splendour. True, that dark valley is before him, and he must now pass through it. But the night will be short, and he knows that when the morning comes, it will usher in a day of indescribable and unending glory. He will not find there, indeed, the sun or the moon: "for the glory of God enlightens

it, and the Lamb is the light thereof; and there shall be no night there." Nay, so strong is faith now, and so wide the vista which she opens into the unseen world, that death is robbed of its terrors and the grave of its gloom. You see, indeed, the earthly house of his tabernacle crumbling down; but not till "the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," is all ready and waiting to receive him. Friends stand around to mourn his dissolution; but they will see only a triumph and a coronation. So much of the light and the spirit of heaven have come down to him, that the last enemy lays aside his useless dart, and comes only as a welcome messenger, to cut the last tie that binds him to earth, and strip off the vestments of the mortal, that the robe of the immortal may be put on. O, thou departing spirit, shall we call this death? I know that thou wilt answer, "Death is swallowed up in victory!"

Finally, the rainbow affords us a glimpse of the magnificence of the heavenly world, and the glory of God.

In the book of Revelation, John says: "After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I

was in the Spirit; and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."

I cannot fall in with the current opinion among Christian writers, that the various objects here enumerated, the throne, the jasper, the sardine stone, and the rainbow, are intended to represent some moral quality or transaction: that the rainbow, for instance, means the covenant of God with his people. I regard the description rather as an attempt to give us some idea, by appeals to sensible representations, of the magnificence of the heavenly world. And I am the more persuaded of the correctness of this view by a similar representation in the book of Ezekiel, in which it is said, "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Heaven cannot, indeed, as we learn from Paul's beatific vision, be described in human language. But by bringing before the imagination the most brilliant objects of the natural world, we get some faint conception of its magnificence; or rather, we learn that the most splendid scenes of earth are only faint emblems of the New Jerusalem and of the Glory of God which forms its light. John seems not

content with the ordinary rainbow as an emblem of the glory that is about the throne of God. He heightens the effect by making the whole bow of an emerald hue; a colour unsurpassed among the choicest gems of nature. He seems disposed to tax imagination to the utmost in its conceptions of material beauty, that it may rise to higher conceptions of uncreated and heavenly splendour. He thus teaches us that we need not fear forming too vivid conceptions of those glories that will burst upon the vision of the righteous when they tread the new earth, and the canopy of the new heavens is arched over them. As we look then upon the literal rainbow and admire its beauties, let us apply to it the conception of the seer of Patmos, and change it into an emerald arch in the heavens. Then let imagination, with that rainbow in her hand, mount up to the New Jerusalem, and with it encircle the throne of God; and then remember that even this splendid image is only a faint shadow of the glory that will meet the disembodied spirit as it enters the celestial city, and that higher and higher glories shall open upon the soul as it rises in capacity and bliss, through everlasting ages. O, what preparation, O what purity, does such a world demand!

THE EUTHANASIA OF AUTUMN.

THE EUTHANASIA

OF

AUTUMN.

"We all do fade as a leaf." *Isaiah, lxiv, 6.*

HE who studies the anatomy and physiology of animals and plants, will be struck with the many analogies of structure and function between them. In both he will find a vital principle, whose presence is essential to every function, and whose absence is death. Both also are sustained by food received from without. Hence organs are needed and provided for preserving and introducing this food into the system. Is it digested by animals? So it is by plants. Have animals organs for receiving and decomposing the atmosphere? So have plants: and in both cases the oxygen is essential to life and health. If there be a beautiful chemistry at work to transform the gross materials of food into the proximate principles of animals, so it is in plants. If the former have organs for separating and throwing off the poisonous and

redundant matter that finds its way into the system, so have the other. As there is in animals a system for the circulation of the blood, whereby it is first brought in contact with the air, and then propelled by the heart into every part of the frame, that every organ may be supplied with nourishment, so, by a force equally effectual, called, endosmosis and exosmosis, and by vessels equally well adapted to the purpose, is the sap of vegetables made to go its round, and supply every part with the materials for growth, and the elimination of the various peculiar principles found in plants. Plants too, like animals, are liable to disease, and from the same causes; causes which sometimes can, and sometimes cannot, be avoided: causes sometimes obvious and striking, and at other times too recondite to be understood, or even discovered. The result, however, is the same in all organic nature, namely, decay and death. Nay, if there be no actual disease, decay gradually comes on, and the vital functions drag heavily along, till at length life departs, and leaves the animal or the vegetable to the disorganizing agencies of chemistry, to revert to its original elements.

The incipient stages of this decay and dissolution are alluded to in the text, "We all do fade as a leaf." As the leaf changes its summer greenness for the brown of autumn, and at length falls, and is driven by the winds along the

surface, and is finally decomposed, so the beauty, strength, and glory of man, as the autumn of life comes on, lose their brightness, and sink ere long into the darkness and dishonour of the grave. At a season of the year then, when the vegetable world is undergoing this transformation, it is wise to learn the lessons taught us by the fading leaf. For it is the intention of God that every natural as well as providential event should be turned by us into moral instruction.

The first moral lesson taught us by the fading leaf, is the certainty of the decay and dissolution of our bodily powers.

The analogy of the seasons to human life, has long since been sung by the poet:

"Behold, fond man,
See here thy pictured life: pass some few years
Thy flowering spring; thy summer's ardent strength;
Thy sober autumn, ripening into age;
And pale concluding winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene."

The contrast is indeed striking, between the rich greenness and expanding vigour of the summer, and the shrivelled and decaying aspect of autumn. Nor do we see any reason for such a change in the physiology of vegetable life, except in a change of temperature. We cannot see why all the functions of animal or vegetable life might not be performed indefinitely under the same circumstances. But experience teaches us, that after a certain time, they will cease their

operation, even though no blighting influence come over them. This is old age, in the vegetable as well as the animal. And it is a law of nature, whose operation no care or prudence can arrest. We may contend with it for a time, and sometimes the vital principle will struggle long before it yields; and now and then, generation after generation see some vegetable or animal Nestor outliving them all, and bidding fair to triumph over the last enemy. But in that war, it is found at last, there is no discharge, and only one conqueror.

There exists, however, among men a most powerful tendency to forget this great law of decay and mortality, and put far off the evil day. In respect to our worldly affairs, indeed, this tendency seems most wisely adapted to promote them. For there are those, "who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage," and they accomplish but little for the world. Nevertheless, this disposition to overlook this inevitable tendency of our physical system, exerts a most disastrous influence upon our higher interests; because we are led by it to put off a preparation for our departure out of the world till the summons comes, and then the stern and unpitying messenger will not wait for us. Therefore it is, that Providence has placed all along our path, mementos of our approaching decay and dissolution. We see

our companions, nay, our dearest friends, dropping all around us, and their glory departing. In the occasional feebleness and pain that assail the strongest, and are the constant companions of multitudes, we have internal testimony of our own, to our approaching dissolution. And as if all this were not enough, we read the same lesson in all nature around us. Amid all the glories that meet us throughout creation, there is a strange mixture of decay and decomposition. Even the most solid materials of our globe, the adamantine rocks and the everlasting hills, are crumbling down, and spreading apparent ruin over the surface. And the proudest human monuments, man's Babel towers and brazen walls, need only the ruthless tooth of time to grind them to dust. But it is at the season of the fading leaf, that nature utters her loudest warning; and this was the lesson intended by the text to be most deeply impressed upon us as we look over the changing landscape.

A second lesson, which we should learn from the fading leaf, is the brevity of human beauty and glory.

It seems but a day since we first saw the vegetable world coming forth from its wintry grave, and, casting aside its fleecy winding sheet, clothe itself with a mantle of green, and cover its head with a flowery wreath. Our hearts beat quick, responsive to the strong pulse

of nature, propelling the vivifying and beautifying fluids through every part of her system. We gazed with delight and poetic rapture upon the beauties of spring, and soon saw them swelling and developing into the full glories of summer. Hill and dale, woodland and open field, feasted the eye with their mellow tints, their deep green waving foliage, and intermingled flowers. We did not see why we might not for years be regaled by the zephyrs that came to our senses, loaded with health and fragrance and delicious song. But a few short days and nights only had passed, when, at the slight touch of frost, the delicate currents were chilled, and soon the changing and fading and falling leaf told us that summer had been driven from her throne, and her glories were trodden in the dust.

And now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove;
Oft startling such as studious walk below,
And slowly circles through the waving air:
Fled is the blasted verdure of the fields,
And, shrunk into their buds, the flowery race
Their sunny robes resign.

In like manner, in the spring of life, we look with delight upon the germinating and expanding beauties and charms of man. With quick elastic step, he bounds before us. The sparkling eye tells us of the strong emotions of the soul within. The rose flourishes on his cheek, and the full and strong muscle, with an excess of

animal spirits, gives fair proportion to his form, and agility and power to his movements. The heart beats so full and strong, and life glows so vividly in his whole frame, that we look upon him as almost invulnerable to the assaults of disease and decay; and fancy that he will long resist the universal law. He too, exhilarated by the full tide of health that courses through his veins, thinks not of sickness and death, except as possibilities, which he may mock at many a long year, and he looks with a mixture of pity and contempt upon the lank and sallow invalid. You lose sight of him for a brief period: and when you meet him again, you are amazed at the change. The sunk and languid eye, the pale and hollow cheek, the emaciated and ungainly form, the curved spine, the slow and trembling gait, the hollow voice, the feeble digestion, the tardy pulse, the failing muscle, the irritable nerve, the mental torpor and dejection; all, all, make you feel that the beauty and glory have departed from him: and you see too how the world, casting one look of pity, perhaps, upon what was once their admiration and their idol, turn away from him with a sigh as the wreck of former greatness, and seek some other object, in the bloom and vigour of life, on which to fasten their regards! Oh, how great and melancholy the transformation! And how soon too has it been effected! You were not

ready for it; and it makes you sad. For this individual was perhaps elevated to a lofty seat, and wielded mighty influences, and stood forth as an illustrious example of human glory and excellency. Yet he could neither conquer nor resist the universal law, that tramples in the dust all human beauty and human glory.

And well would it be, when we witness such monuments of the brevity of man's most splendid characteristics, if we could make the lesson personal. But though we can see that others are losing their charms, and their vigour, and mourn over it, how amazed often are we, when an intimation is made to us, that others witness the same symptoms of decay in ourselves. "Grey hairs are here and there upon him," says the prophet, "yet he knoweth it not." He is amazed that any should think him old, or failing in his physical or intellectual powers. He resists as long as possible the optician's aid to his flattened eye-ball, and tries to convince himself that he has still the elastic vigour of muscle, and mental energy of youth. But alas, "we all do fade as the leaf;" and to close our eyes against the evidences of the fact, is only to treasure up bitter disappointment for the hour when the visor shall be torn from our eyes, by time's ruthless hand. Better is it to listen to the lesson which decaying nature reads to us so impressively at this season of the year, and not make

ourselves the ridicule of the world, by striving to hide the marks of decaying energies, which their keen eyes will be sure to discover, long before we see them ourselves.

Such I doubt not is the most important instruction which is taught us in the text. And this may be learned from the changes in nature in all parts of the world, save tropical regions, where perpetual summer reigns, and the fading leaf drops almost unobserved. In such climates this text could have little force: and so its impressiveness would vary as we pass from the equator through different isothermal zones. But in this country, the phenomena of the fading leaf exhibit peculiarities found, I believe, nowhere else: and if I mistake not, we may learn from these peculiarities some moral lessons, not taught by the mere fact that in autumn vegetation decays and passes into its wintry grave.

With us, then, the fading leaf is not a mere example of decay, producing sadness, if not melancholy, in other lands. When autumn approaches, some slight frosts chill the vegetable fluids, and weaken the power of their delicate organs to produce the various proximate principles in proper proportions. In other words, a diseased action supervenes in the vessels, and the result is, an excess of acid or alkali. These substances, it is well known, produce most

striking effects upon vegetable colours; changing sometimes those that are dull into a brilliancy often gaudy, and sometimes oppressive. Ere long the effect of these chemical changes becomes manifest upon the foliage of our forests as the autumn advances; and then follow weeks, in which the eye is met by prospects the most brilliant and imposing that can be conceived of, whose description the inhabitants of other lands regard as caricature. The richest and most diverse hues that nature can produce by the separation and blending of all the prismatic colours, meet us in every grove, and hill side, and mountain. Red of every shade, from crimson to cherry; yellow, from bright sulphur to orange; brown, from clove brown to liver brown; and green, from grass green to oil green, stand forth in distinct spots, yet all mingled in fantastic proportions, and clothing the landscape with an almost dazzling brilliancy; especially when lighted up by the mellow rays of an October sun. Said once a distinguished foreigner from continental Europe, when shown a sketch of our autumnal scenery, before he had seen it in nature, "this is caricature;" but when he had witnessed it, "the drawing," said he, "does not come up to nature." "What a strange country must America be," said once the simple minded Nestorians of Persia, when looking at the same drawing, "what a strange country

must America be, where the people live in wooden houses, and the trees are painted."

What now are the peculiar moral lessons which we may learn from these splendid exhibitions of autumnal metamorphoses in the forests of our country? The text does not indeed teach them directly: Yet since the phenomena of the fading leaf vary so much in different lands, we may regard this passage as indirectly teaching us whatever lessons natural religion may derive from these peculiarities.

I say then, in the first place, that our autumnal scenery testifies to the benevolence of God.

The laws of vegetable nature might have been so constituted, that at the close of the summer months, a sudden change might have come over the foliage, and from a pleasant green, it might, by a single step, have reverted to a shrivelled, blackened, and unsightly mass; as if scathed by fire. That would, indeed, have given us a striking emblem of the suddenness of death, as it sometimes falls upon the unsuspecting: but it would have produced only melancholy emotions, as we looked out upon the seared landscape. And, indeed, such seems to be the most striking impression produced by the autumnal scenery of other lands. And hence the poet of the seasons, in describing that part of the year, says,

‘He comes! he comes! in every breeze, the Power
Of Philosophic Melancholy comes!
His near approach the sudden starting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air,
The softened feature, and the beating heart,
Pierced deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.’

But though, when we contemplate the fading leaf of our climate, as an emblem of decay, some degree of sadness cannot but be excited, yet other and more cheerful emotions are also awakened, which soften the melancholy into a pleasing experience, as one of our own poets has sung:

“ What is there saddening in the Autumn leaves?
Have they that “ green and yellow Melancholy”
That the sweet poet spake of? Had he seen
Our variegated woods, when first the frost
Turns into beauty all October’s charms;
When the dread fever quits us; when the storms
Of the wild Equinox, with all its wet,
Have left the land as the first deluge left it,
With a bright bow of many colours hung
Upon the forest tops: he had not sigh’d.”

No: he would have sung of the Divine Benevolence, that has thus spread rich beauty over the face of unwelcome decay, and made nature’s party-coloured winding sheet so attractive, that we smile with her as she puts it on. It is a beautiful example of that Infinite Benevolence, which, though it could not but make nature every where remind us that we live in a fallen world, has yet so mingled mercy in the cup, that we drink it almost without pain, and are softened

by the kindness that yearns over us in our misery, and throws many a bow of promise over the dark cloud that spreads over the heavens. This mingling of goodness and severity, shows us the exuberance of the benevolence, which seems loath to inflict merited punishment; and thus inspires us with the hope that we may be delivered from the ruins of the apostacy, and again enjoy the unclouded favour of God. It was not necessary that incipient decay should be made even attractive, in order to accomplish all that justice demanded. But God delights to influence men by the power of goodness. In the great plans which he has devised for the rescue of our race from the consequences of the fall, He has lavished the riches of that goodness: and it is pleasant to see the same kindness manifested in all the arrangements and operations of nature.

In the second place, our autumnal scenery affords a striking analogy to the changes which man experiences as he passes from time into eternity.

The difference is indeed great, between the rich greenness and waving foliage of August with the rustling and sighing zephyr, and the barren trees of November, with the northern blasts whistling through the branches; and greater still the difference, when the last vestige of life seems to have departed, and the vegetable

world is wrapped in its winding sheet of ice and snow. But has life really all gone? No: it has only withdrawn to the citadel, and there concentrated its powers to resist the assaults of frost, and prepare for new developments, when the sun shall return from southern skies, and a more genial temperature shall revisit these northern climes. It is only a change of state, and not the extinction of life. The trees have merely put off their summer robes, because inappropriate for the sterner climate of winter. Life does, indeed, *seem* to have departed. But we know that its germ is yet unextinct; and that there shall come, and that ere long, a resurrection day. The icy grasp of winter shall be relaxed; and then shall the mysterious principle of life again develop its marvellous powers, in weaving a new and lovelier robe to grace the fair form of spring.

See now in these changes a striking analogy to those through which man passes on his way to immortality. As disease fastens upon him, or old age creeps on, his beauty and glory are, indeed, made to consume away like the moth. The rose flies from his cheek, his senses become dull, his brain torpid, and all the wheels of life move slow, because the vital energies are failing. And even the mind seems to partake of the general decay. However tenacious of their hold the powers of life may be, we know that ere

long they must yield, and *man's glorious beauty become as a flower.* The work goes on, till vitality resigns its charge of the human frame, so curiously and wonderfully made, and it quickly becomes the prey of disorganizing agencies, reverting to its original elements; which, scattered by the winds and dissolved by the waters, enter into new combinations, and assume new forms of loveliness and life. In short, the triumph of death seems to be complete. The man has disappeared, and survivors feel and weep as though he had disappeared for ever.

But after all, how deceptive are these appearances, and how contrary to the reality. We know, because both reason and Scripture teach us, that he whom death has thus stricken down, has not become extinct. A germ, a precious, priceless germ; the man himself, indeed, still survives. There is a deathless principle within, which smiles over the wreck of the body. Whether it has gone forth a disembodied, immaterial principle; or whether it be still attached to some attenuated, undecaying, material tenement, we know not: But it exists: nay, having broken loose from its prison-house of flesh and sense, it has risen to a higher existence, and entered upon a brighter sphere of action. The body, indeed, like the barren tree, must for a while lie dormant in the grave. But

that too, shall at length emerge in renovated glory.

“ See truth, love, and mercy, in triumph descending,
And nature all glowing in Eden’s first bloom;
On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses are blending,
And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb.”

In the third place, our autumnal scenery forcibly represents to us, emblematically, what ought to be the effect of adversity upon us in the development of our piety.

It may have seemed inappropriate to my hearers, that I introduced in a Sabbath day discourse, a scientific theory to explain the manner in which the hues of autumn are produced in our forests. But my object will now be apparent. For if that theory be admitted, it illustrates the effect which adversity should have upon us. We might expect, that when the plant is first smitten by frost, its functions would at once cease, its foliage droop, and wither, and fall, and decomposition ensue. But though the action of the delicate machinery is so disturbed that it cannot any more elaborate perfect vegetation, still the organs do what they can, and though they fail to preserve and continue the healthy greenness of summer, they develop hues still more brilliant, and make creation smile, though about to descend into her wintry grave. They clothe her with an appropriate dress for her coming transmutation, and

lead observers to admire the wonderful chemistry within, that can thus make decay seem lovely and attractive.

In like manner, do the frosts of adversity operate upon the true hearted Christian. In other words, they develop virtues in his character which would otherwise have never appeared. Where the true stamina of piety are not found, the man often sinks at once when smitten: his hopes die, and his affections are dried up: and he becomes the prey of despondency, if not of despair, the wreck of what he once was; a withered monument of a broken heart. He resembles the tree blasted by the lightning, or scathed by fire. But he who views his chastisements as the necessary inflictions of his heavenly Father, and intended for his best good, desires and aims that they shall produce their appropriate effects. And they do develop in brighter colours, like the foliage of autumn, his Christian virtues, his sweet submission, his deep humility, his expanding charity, his long forbearance, his humble gratitude, his unaffected kindness, in short, his ardent love to God and man. Instead of being crushed by the load of sorrow, or frozen into a petrifaction, he bears up nobly under the load, and shoots forth many a new trait of character, that blossoms in beauty, and bears fruit in abundance. His virtues never would have shone so brightly, had not adversity touched

his heart with her icy hand. Those virtues do, indeed, make us feel that the man is ripening too fast for heaven to continue long below; just as the variegated splendours of an autumnal forest, tell us of approaching winter. But it is not the less interesting, because the Christian exhibits more and more of the spirit of heaven. He may die unto the world, but he will live unto God. And this accords with an inspired exhortation: "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Finally, our autumnal scenery is a significant emblem of the manner in which the Christian should go down to the grave.

The gay splendour of our forests, as autumn comes on, may seem to some inappropriate, when we consider that it is the precursor of decay and death. But when we remember that the plant still lives, and after a season of inaction will awake to new and more vigorous life, and that the apparent decay is only laying aside a summer robe, because unfit for winter, is it not appropriate that nature should hang out signals of joy, rather than of sorrow? Why should she not descend exultingly, and in her richest dress, into the grave, in hope of so early and so glorious a resurrection?

And what is the condition of the Christian, as he perceives himself approaching the tomb?

Long since has he fled from the curse of a broken law, to Him who bore it in his own body on the tree. And ever since that well remembered time, when the hope of sin forgiven and heaven secured, filled his soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory, has he felt that he was not his own, and that this world was not his home: that his best friends were on the other side of the dark valley; and there his Saviour had prepared a mansion for him. Thither has strong affection drawn his soul, and often, when opening the eye and the ear of faith, he has contemplated his everlasting rest, has he felt "a desire to depart and be with Christ." And especially when sin within and without has harassed and overcome him, has he sighed for the perfect holiness of heaven. And now the progress of years, or the pains of disease, admonish him that the time of his release is approaching. Shall he then put on the weeds of mourning, and shrink back distressed, and cling to this world with a stronger grasp, although he has only to look up to see the arms of his blessed Saviour opened, and departed Christian friends beckoning him to join them in their happy home on high? What though he feels the earthly house of his tabernacle crumbling down: he has a house not made with hands; a building of God, eternal in the heavens. What though he must bid adieu to beloved friends below? He goes

to join those no less beloved on high; and those now left behind will follow him soon. Does he tremble in dread of the parting struggle? But how short if endured! and how often found to be a mere figment of imagination;

“ What though the sickle sometimes keen,
Just scars us as we reap the golden grain?
More than thy balm, O Gilead, heals the wound.”

What occasion, then, has the real Christian to welcome the harbinger of his translation from earth to heaven! Let surviving friends, as well they may, mourn over his departure, and clothe themselves with the insignia of sorrow. But let his soul be clothed with the bright garments of peace, and joy, and praise, as he comes nearer and nearer the hour of release. Thus will he imitate nature in her autumnal scenes. Thus will he do honour to the religion he professes; to the faith by which his soul is anchored to the eternal throne; to the Saviour, by whom he has been rescued from sin and destruction; and to the God whose Infinite grace has transformed him from a slave of sin and an heir of perdition, into a freeman of the Lord, and a king and a priest unto God.

But in order that we may be able thus to look on decay and death as welcome messengers, and not as hated and terrific enemies, we must lead a life of humble and devoted piety. God must be glorified in our lives, or we cannot

glorify Him when sinking into the grave. Daily must we come so near to eternity in our meditations, that its scenes are familiar, and we seem to be gazing upon them almost without an intervening veil. Daily, too, must we imbibe more and more of the spirit of heaven, and feel more and more how empty and vain this world is. In short, we must learn to pant after God and heaven, "as the hart panteth after the water brooks," and feel our souls drawn upwards with overwhelming power, before we can exult as our material framework is falling into dust, and look upon our winding sheet as our coronation robe, and upon the King of Terrors as the Prince of Peace.

And shall such a Christian be overwhelmed with fear and sorrow, and put on the badges of mourning, when he feels within him the premonitions of such a glorious transformation? Rather let him who indulges no such hopes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and take, as a fit emblem of his condition, the forest scathed and blackened by fire, and sit down in inconsolable sorrow, and begin the weeping and wailing of the lost, before he is forced into the pit. But should the Christian go down to the grave in sadness, when that is the end of his sorrow? Shall he who has been sweating and suffering with slaves, and as a slave, under the world, that most ferocious of all taskmasters, shall he be disconsolate,

because the Deliverer approaches, to knock off his fetters, and to make him a freeman for ever? Shall he who has been struggling for years, as on a wide battle field, "with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with spiritual wickedness in high places," and has often fainted in the contest, shall he not rejoice when he hears the shout of victory, and is summoned to receive the conqueror's crown, in the presence of the universe, and from the hands of the Captain of his salvation? Shall he not say with Paul, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Shall he who has been long buffeting the winds and the waves, and almost sinking, feel no joy when he approaches the peaceful haven, and the life boat is sent out to receive him? Shall he who has long dwelt on the outskirts of creation, in a land of clouds and fogs, be sad because the invitation has come to go to the cloudless centre of the universe, where truth is written in sun beams over his head, and its transparent fountain gushes up beneath his feet? Does he sigh and weep, who has long been an exile and a prisoner in a distant and inhospitable land,

when the vessel is spreading her canvass to carry him back to his father's house, and to the embrace of beloved friends? Yet how truly is the devoted Christian an exile in this world: how uncongenial a place for his new born soul: and what mighty attractions draw him towards his eternal home! Is a robe of sadness appropriate for him who is invited to become a citizen of the New Jerusalem, and there to be anointed a king and a priest unto God, and to live in his smiles? Oh no! such were not the feelings of the hundred and forty and four thousand, who have been called to go up to Mount Zion. As a great cloud of witnesses they come around us to-day, and point back to the time, when with joyful step, they went down to the brink of Jordan, and saw the waters divide for their passage. Soon as the summons came, they threw aside the badges of sorrow and mourning, and put on the garments of salvation. As they drew nearer and nearer the heavenly world, its spirit and its joy were breathed more and more into their souls, and its radiant glory beamed from their faces. As they went forward, the dark valley was all filled with light, and they knew not where earth ended, or where heaven begun; for their hearts were full of heaven. Like them may we all live! Like them may we die, and with them be joined in glory everlasting!

THE CORONATION OF WINTER.

THE CORONATION
OF
WINTER.

"He casteth forth his ice like morsels." Psalm cxlvii, 17.

THE eminent saints of ancient times were watchful observers of the objects and operations of nature. In every event they saw the agency of God; and therefore they took delight in its examination. For they could not but receive pleasure from witnessing the manifestations of His wisdom and beneficence, whom they adored and loved. They had not learned, as we have in modern times, to interpose unbending laws between the Creator and his works, and then, by giving inherent power to these laws, virtually to remove God away from his creation, into an ethereal extramundane sphere of repose and happiness. I do not say that this is the universal feeling at the present day. But it prevails extensively in the Church, and still more in the world. The ablest philosophers of modern times do, indeed, maintain, that a natural law

is nothing more than the uniform mode in which God acts; and that after all, it is not the efficiency of the law, but God's own energy, that keeps all nature in motion: that he operates immediately and directly, not remotely and indirectly, in bringing about every event: and that every natural change is as really the work of God, as if the eye of sense could see his hand turning round the wheels of nature. But although the ablest philosophy of modern times has reached this conclusion, the great mass of the community, and even of Christians, are still groping in the darkness of that mechanical system, which ascribes the operations of the natural world to nature's laws, instead of nature's God. By a sort of figure, indeed, it is proper, as the advocates of this system admit to speak of God as the Author of natural events, because he originally ordained the laws of nature. But they have no idea that He exerts any direct and immediate agency in bringing them about; and therefore, when they look upon these events, they feel no impression of the presence and active agency of Jehovah.

But how different, as already remarked, were the feelings of ancient saints. The Psalmist could not look up to heaven without exclaiming, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night

showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. When he cast his eyes abroad upon the earth, his full heart cried out, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches." In his eye, every thing was full of God. It was God who "sent springs into the valleys, which run among the hills." When the thunder storm passed before him, it was "God's voice in the heavens, and his lightnings that lighted the world." When he heard the bellowings and saw the smoke of the volcano, it was God "who looketh on the earth and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills and they smoke."

In like manner did Job refer all natural operations to the immediate agency of God, and bid us draw from them lessons of wisdom. "Ask now the beasts," says he, "and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare it unto thee. Who knoweth not, in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?"

The writers of the New Testament we find to be penetrated with the same sentiments. Especially do we see a desire to learn a religious lesson from every event, manifested in the history of Jesus Christ. In giving instruction to

his disciples, he seized for illustration upon almost every occurrence in the natural, political, and social world around him. When for instance he would teach his followers to rely on God's Providence, and not be unreasonably anxious for temporal good, he appealed to the animal and vegetable worlds: "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap: which have neither store house nor barn: and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls." "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." "If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith!" So at the well of Jacob in Samaria, how beautifully did he discourse to the woman of the living water, which he was able to give. In short, as the Saviour met the sower going forth to sow, or saw the corn growing up, or the trees putting on their foliage and flowers; as he saw the vineyards dressed, the grass waving in the fields, the birds flying through the air, the chickens gathering under the wing of their mother, the burrows of the foxes, the plowmen holding the plow, the architect building houses, the soldier going to war, or a band of thieves breaking into the house; all these events, and many others,

were seized upon by him to illustrate great moral and religious truths.

Now with such illustrious examples, is it not the part of wisdom to attempt to seize upon passing events, in nature as well as in society, and make them subservient to moral instruction? I know, indeed, that in an age, too artificial already, and becoming daily more so, this is not fashionable: unless some event occurs in nature as striking as a miracle. From time to time, however, nature puts on some new aspect, so striking and peculiar, as to elicit some regard from the most inattentive observer. And for the last ten days, we have been living in the midst of one of those peculiar manifestations, which must have interested every one, and may afford some valuable religious hints. God has "cast forth his ice like morsels;" and those morsels have clothed nature with a richer and more attractive robe, than we can hope to witness more than once in a life of three score years and ten. It should not pass without some notice. Allow me, then, in the first place, to give a brief description of this phenomenon, as it met my own eye; for from what I can learn, I should not think it strange, if some of the most brilliant features of this exhibition were scarcely seen, even by some who lived in the midst of it.

On Wednesday, the 17th of January, a moderate and very cold snow storm closed a

little before mid-day, leaving the surface of the earth and of vegetables at so low a temperature, as to absorb heat rapidly from objects placed upon them. But during the following night the thermometer rose nearly to the freezing point, and a moderate rain commenced, which continued about two days, almost without interruption. It was accompanied with but little wind, and the rain drops, most of the time, were almost as fine as mist; so that the whole amount of rain scarcely exceeded an inch and a quarter in depth. The thermometer did not rise during the storm quite to the freezing point; and towards the close, it sunk several degrees below it. The result was, that all the rain froze to the surface on which it fell, and formed a coat of pure transparent ice, over the snow, and all other objects exposed to it, from a quarter of an inch to more than an inch in thickness. On the snow this crust was strong enough to sustain a man; and almost as smooth as the frozen surface of a lake or pond; looking as if the billows of the ocean had been suddenly congealed before they could subside entirely.

Still more striking, however, was the effect upon the vegetable world, now stripped of its foliage. The leafless branches and twigs of every tree, of every shrub, and even of every spire of grass, or other annual plant, that rose above the surface of the snow, were encased in

this thick and beautiful hyaline coat, as transparent as the purest water. Along these branches, in many instances, the ice swelled into tubercular masses, and almost uniformly terminated in a knob; so as to resemble strings of gigantic glass beads. Now just imagine the effect, as the sun from time to time on Saturday, broke through the clouds upon these countless natural gems, prepared to refract and reflect his light with more than his original brightness. I thought I had before seen splendid exhibitions of this sort in the glittering dew drops of summer and the frost work of winter. But the present scene surpassed all my former experience incomparably; and even the figments of my imagination. If the twigs of every tree, and shrub, and spire, had been literally covered with diamonds of the purest water and largest known size, say an inch in diameter, they would not, I am sure, have poured upon the eye in the sun light a more dazzling splendour. But it may give those not familiar with the diamond, a better idea of the scene, to compare the icy pendants with those of cut glass, which are sometimes hung in great profusion around large chandeliers, in many of our churches and public halls. It is no exaggeration to say, that each tree, nay, each shrub, of moderate size, exhibited as numerous crystalline drops, and as brilliant an aspect, as I have ever seen around the largest chandelier. Think,

then, how much superior must have been the aspect of a large tree, with a graceful shape and wide spreading branches. Nay, think of a whole forest with the rays of the sun darting through, and lighting up ten thousand radiant points of a diamond hue and intense brilliancy. These could be seen as many as forty or fifty rods, and beyond that distance, the forests, as far as the eye could reach, had the aspect and the richness of embossed silver.

When I perceived what a splendid robe nature had put on, I went forth to pay my homage in her magnificent temple. As I wandered over "the sea of glass," through fields, and forests, over hill and dale, new forms of beauty met me at every step. Amazement was soon succeeded by admiration, and admiration gave place to intense delight; nor could I help repeating over the poet's enthusiastic eulogy:

"Oh, Nature! how in every charm supreme,
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new,
Oh for the voice and fire of seraphim,
To sing thy glories with devotion due."

I could not believe, that any more splendid developments of this phenomenon awaited me. But on Saturday night the thermometer sunk to zero, and on Sabbath morning the sun arose in a cloudless sky, and the icy shoots and pendants, more thoroughly crystallized by the intense cold, formed ten thousand points of overwhelming brightness on every side. Nor were all the

sparkling brilliants, as on the day before, of colourless light. But here and there I began to notice the prismatic colours; now exhibiting a gem of most splendid sapphire blue; next one of amethystine purple; next one of intense topaz yellow; then a sea green beryl, changing by a slight change of posture, into a rich emerald green; and then one of deep hyacinth red. As the sun approached the meridian, the number and splendour of these coloured gems increased; so that on a single tree hundreds of them might be seen, and sometimes so large was their size and intense their colour, that at a distance of fifty rods, they seemed equal to Sirius, nay, to the morning star! and of hues the most delicate and rich that can be conceived of, exactly imitating, so far as I could judge, the natural gems; and not partaking at all of those less delicate and gaudy tints, by which a practised eye can distinguish genuine from supposititious precious stones. And by moving the eye a few inches, we could see these different colours pass into one another, and thus witness the rich intermediate shades. I have seen many splendid groups of precious stones, wrought and unwrought, in the large collections of our land; and until I witnessed this scene, they seemed of great beauty.¹

¹ During the past summer (1850.) I have seen very many of the most splendid crown jewels and other collections of gems in Europe: yet I see no reason for altering at all the statements in the text.

But it is now literally true, that they appear to me comparatively dull and insignificant. In short, it seemed as if I was gazing upon a landscape which had before existed only in a poet's imagination. It is what he would call a fairy land, but a more Christian designation would be, a celestial land.

On Monday it was cloudy, and the phenomena presented no new aspect. On Tuesday there was a storm of fine rain and snow, and the beautiful transparency of the icy coat was changed into the aspect of ground glass. This gave to the trees a new and more delicate appearance. They resembled engraved work, formed of pure unburnished silver; and had the sun shone upon them, they must have been intensely beautiful. I now supposed that the most brilliant part of this scene, its golden period, had passed: and that the silver period of Tuesday, would soon be succeeded by the usual iron reign of winter; especially as there fell several inches of snow during the night. But the cold restored the ice upon the trees to more than its original transparency, and the sun rose on Wednesday morning upon a cloudless sky; and a wind scattered the snow from the branches, and all the phenomena opened upon us with more than their Sabbath day glories.

“ 'Tis winter's jubilee! this day
His stores their countless treasures yield.

See how the diamond glances play
In ceaseless blaze from tree and field.
A shower of gems is strewed around,
The flowers of winter, rich and rare;
Rubies and sapphires deck the ground,
The topaz, emerald, all are there."

As the sun approached the meridian, one had only to receive his rays at a certain angle, refracted through the crystal covering of a tree, in order to witness gems more splendid than art ever prepared. Four-fifths of them were diamonds: but the sapphires were numerous; the topaz and the beryl not unfrequent; and occasionally the chrysolite and the hyacinth shone with intense brilliancy. There was wind also on that day; and as the branches waved to and fro, these various gems appeared and vanished and re-appeared in endless variety; chaining the eye to the spot, until the overpowered optic nerve shrunk from its office. But the rich vision did not cease through all that cloudless day. Nor did it terminate when the sun went down. For then the full orbed moon arose, and gave another most bewitching aspect to the scene. During the day the light had often been painfully intense. But the softness of moonlight permitted the eye to gaze and gaze untired, and yet the splendour seemed hardly less than during the day. Most of the bright points were of a mild topaz yellow, and when seen against the heavens, they could hardly be distinguished from the stars; or when seen in the forest, especially

as one passed rapidly along, it seemed as if countless fire-flies were moving among the branches. Yet occasionally I saw other colours of the spectrum, especially the bluish green of the beryl. Through that livelong night did these indescribable glories meet the eye of the observer. And on Thursday another cloudless morning and clear shining sun brought back the glories of Wednesday; nay, to my eye, this last day of the spectacle seemed the most splendid of all; and one could hardly realize that he was not translated to some celestial region. A second glorious evening set in. But ere morning clouds overspread the sky, and the powerful rain of Friday and Friday night left the trees without a vestige of ice, and consequently ended the enchanting phenomenon, to be seen again we know not when. In some places trees have been injured by the weight of the ice; and this feature is noticed and complained of by men. But taste and piety might well be contented to see the vegetable world decimated, if necessary to so enchanting an exhibition.

Exegetical writers upon the Bible, sometimes tell us of what they call *ἀπαξ λεγομένα*; that is, words used only once in the whole Scriptures. In human life, too, there are events which we may call *ἀπαξ φαινομένα*; that is, appearing only once during a generation. He who has seen one total eclipse of the sun, or one transit of a planet over the

sun, or one November shower of meteors, or one splendid comet, or one Lunar Iris, or one volcanic eruption, may be satisfied, and cannot hope for a second sight.¹ I reckon this glacial phenomenon among these unique revelations of nature, whose repetition may be reserved for posterity. To those who have not witnessed all the features of this exhibition which I have described, I may seem enthusiastic and extravagant in my estimates. But there are those present, I trust, who can testify that they are not exaggeration; and on whose memories they have made as indelible an impression as a total eclipse of the sun, or a splendid comet, or the transit of Venus, or Mercury; and will be looked back upon as a pleasant oasis along the journey of life.²

But let me hasten to consider some of the more striking religious applications of the phenomena under consideration.

¹ With the exception of the volcano, I have now seen all these rare phenomena. Nay, of the Lunar Iris, I witnessed last August, (1850,) a second splendid example, as I was travelling through the north part of France: and I might add, the *Water Spout*, still more unusual upon land, which I saw in the Irish channel. Truly the question of the Roman poet comes to me with a solemn meaning:

Cur non, ut plenus vitae, convivia recedis?

² Since the period of the glacial phenomenon described in the text, I have seen only one analogous exhibition, and that partial, and far inferior to the first. On Mount Holyoke, however, there was a very splendid display of the gems, but the ice was mostly confined to the mountain.

It may not be generally known, that there are two circumstances of frequent occurrence, in which a person can see a beautiful, though inferior exhibition of gems by the refraction

In the first place, they lead us to infer what a splendid world this might have been, even with the present laws of nature, had sin never entered it.

When God foresaw that man would sin, he decreed that death must follow in the train. Nor would it be consistent with infinite holiness to place a sinful mortal being in a world as perfect and as full of splendid exhibitions of divine skill, as might exist in the residence of innocence and holiness. The laws and operations of nature, therefore, must be so cramped and adjusted, that while they would present many exquisite evidences of the wisdom and benevolence of the Deity, they should not bring out the most perfect and splendid exhibition. This world might easily have been so made, that its rocks should have been composed wholly of the most beautiful gems, and every landscape have shone with the glory of Eden. And it does seem as if God had so balanced and adjusted

of the sun's rays. One such opportunity occurs in the morning, when the grass and the trees are covered with frost work: and another, when a heavy dew or a shower in the night has produced a multitude of drops of water. The most favourable position to see the gems, is to face the rising sun; when the observer will perceive upon the grass before him, a parabolic curve, strung with all the coloured and uncoloured gems described in the text, though of a smaller size. The same may be seen upon the shrubs and trees. And they might be observed in other directions though more scattered. And one who will take the pains to look out for this phenomenon, will be quite often gratified by witnessing a rich variety of diamonds, sapphires, beryls, topazes, etc., giving him a faint idea of the splendid example described in this volume.

the agencies of nature, that once or twice in a generation he allows some splendid development of unearthly beauty to teach us what might perhaps have been a settled order of things, had not sin impressed her harpy fingers upon the face of nature. While, therefore, we are grateful for what is left us, so much superior to what we deserve, let us be reminded, when we witness such exhibitions as the one under consideration, how much more glorious might have been our lot, had not sin brought in death, and made "the whole creation groan and travail together in pain until now." Let us loathe the hateful tyrant who has thus degraded us. Let us break asunder his chains, and wait in humble hope for "the manifestation of the sons of God," and for the glories of "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

In the second place, with what exquisite skill must the agencies of nature be balanced, in order to bring about such an exhibition as we have witnessed!

It was found necessary to allow the agents of atmospheric changes some latitude, or oscillation, in their operation: and this is what gives such an appearance of confusion and irregularity to meteorological phenomena: and this also rendered it more difficult so to balance these agencies, that they should bring about a certain result with infallible certainty; in a case, too, where a great many of them are concerned.

Had any of these varied in their intensity, by an infinitesimal quantity, it would have been fatal in the present instance, to such results as we have witnessed. Had the temperature varied during forty-eight hours, from what it was, a single degree higher or lower; had it been higher at all, either at the beginning or end of the storm; had the descent of the rain been more rapid or in greater quantity, or in larger drops; had the wind, as is common in storms, been higher; or had the more recondite agencies that produce and regulate storm, such as electricity, been in a slightly different state, some of the exquisite features of the phenomena must have been marred, and the whole have resulted in an ordinary case of rain, hail, or snow. Job speaks of the balancings of the clouds, as among the mysteries of ancient philosophy. But how much nicer the balancing and counterbalancing of the complicated agencies of the atmosphere, in order to bring out this glacial miracle in full perfection! What wisdom and power short of infinite, could have brought it about! And when, we may ask, shall it be witnessed again! As easily might we answer the question of one gazing on a splendid figure in the Kaleidoscope, when that precise exhibition will appear in the course of its revolutions. It is possible that the next turn of the instrument may present it; but almost certain that a whole life of labour, in turn-

ing it round, would not bring it again. Nor can we hardly dare hope again, during our short lives, to see the time when all the requisite contingencies shall conspire to bring this identical phenomenon before us, that we may feast our eyes with its beauties. Let us be thankful that we have seen it once; and for so many days, and under so many phases; and let us not fail to learn from it a new and impressive lesson of the infinite skill and benevolence of the Author of Nature.

In the third place, how strikingly emblematical has this scene been, of human life!

As we set forward in the morning of our days, how brilliant and enticing is the prospect before us! The sun of hope throws its full radiance over the landscape, and the rays come reflected to us in rainbow colours; and with buoyant spirits and elastic step, we bound forward in pursuit of the splendid gems that glitter in our horizon. Many a golden path opens before us, to fortune, to fame, or to pleasure; and though we hear behind us the warning voice of experience, bidding us moderate our expectations, and not centre all our hopes upon what may disappoint and deceive us, we are too sure that the visions before us are realities, and can be obtained, to be willing to falter in our course. Life seems to us as full of splendour as the scenes of the last week; and its honours and pleasures as inviting as the gems that hung temptingly from

the trees. And, indeed, the honours, emoluments, and enjoyments, which are the objects of pursuit, are as much realities as were the icy gems of nature. And in both cases, they might be grasped. But when we took the icy morsel into our hands, which at a distance had dazzled us with its splendour, how soon did its colours vanish, and itself melt away into a drop of water. So when we have obtained the honours, reputation, and pleasures, after which we aspire, how soon does their glory depart, and the harpy fingers of envy and detraction, endeavour to filch them from us; and the cup of nectar which we have seized, becomes changed into wormwood and gall; and we find that we have been raised to distinction, only to become a fairer mark for the poisoned arrows of the world to reach; and we learn that instead of a crown of glory, we have put on a crown of thorns.

Suppose that during the past week any of us had been so fascinated by the fairy scene before us, that our supreme affections had become fastened upon it. What a sense of desolation would have come over us, as we awoke yesterday morning, and found not a single vestige remaining of the objects to which we had given our hearts. So if in this life we place our supreme desires or confidence upon any worldly good, a single storm of adversity may sweep away all our prospects and possessions, and leave

us utterly heart-stricken and overwhelmed. And sooner or later such a storm will overtake every one and sink him in utter desolation, who has not laid up treasures in heaven, beyond the reach of all worldly changes. Does my voice to-day, fall upon any heart that has nothing to trust in beyond this world ! Alas, how painful and perilous its condition !

In the fourth place, we are taught by the phenomena under consideration, how meagre and insignificant, when compared with nature, are the proudest human efforts at ornament or display.

The love of display is one of the strongest passions of the human heart; as the history of every age testifies. In the rudest conditions of society, it exhibits itself in painting the body and the dress with gaudy colours, and on public occasions especially, in exhibiting a profusion of ornaments, derived from the skins of quadrupeds, the feathers of birds, and the shells of molluscs; and with trinkets of glass, or tin, or brass. The more civilized man smiles at such coarse and gaudy displays; and yet he shows a passion equally strong for brilliant exhibitions of ornamental objects, more costly and in better taste. Strip off the waving plume of the warrior, and his golden epaulette from his shoulder, and the glittering star from his breast, and his gold and diamond-hilted sword from his side; strip off the trappings of his steed, and send him forth to the

campaign with only coarse garments and naked steel, and you have robbed his work of half its attractions. Deprive him of the hope of witnessing the splendid gala day on his return from war, of riding in full military costume in the elegant barouche, beneath the triumphal arch, or amid huzzaing crowds, and I fear that much which goes by the name of patriotism would be found to be only a love of distinction.

But it is not the warrior alone who exhibits the strength of this passion. Through all the grades of society a constant strife is going on for the palm in external show. Each man endeavours to excel his peers and to ape his superiors in dress, in equipage, and in entertainments. The more wealth the greater the means of display: but the passion seems almost equally strong in the peasant as the prince. When men are divided into parties, each side strives to excel its rival in the parade and decorations of its public occasions; and in religion, it is well known how widely and fatally meretricious forms of worship have smothered its vitality, and left for Jehovah only the gilded but defunct carcass of devotion. In this land of republican simplicity, we see, indeed, only comparatively feeble manifestations of this passion. But where arbitrary governments exist, and wealth and titles are hereditary, and where Church and State are linked together, not for

the purpose of supporting religion, but of supporting each other, costly displays of dress and equipage, stars and ribbons, crowns and coronets, and other paraphernalia of royalty, form most essential means of feeding national pride, and making the poor forget their degradation: although the expenditures requisite are so enormous, that if applied in charity, they would send food and raiment, education and happiness, into all the hovels of poverty.

Would now that the costliest decorations that ever pride has put on, and the most splendid pageants which the world has ever seen, could have been gathered together upon New England soil during the last week, and been brought into comparison with the simple exhibition of nature which has passed before us. I would that all the crown jewels and other decorations of all the monarchs of Europe and Asia had been here, as well as their possessors; nay, that all the splendours of their coronations could have been exhibited. I would have had brought hither the decorations of the most splendid palaces and castles, and the gold and silver, and precious stones of all the famous processions and gala days, military, political, and religious, of the old and the new world; and I would that individuals, who delight in display, had brought forward their proudest ornaments. All these I would have placed by the side of one of our

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forests, and there, under the full beams of the meridian sun, or the full moon, I would have bid the world look on, and see how comparatively meagre and insignificant was the collected artificial splendour of earth, in comparison with the glories of that single forest, decked in one day by the magic hand of nature. And I would have bid them remember, that a thousand forests of New England were at the same moment emitting splendours equally magnificent. Could the monarchs of the old world, could any who have devoted their time and property to the pageantry of office, or party, or sect, or to gratify personal ambition, could they ever have forgotten, how nature, on these bleak shores, and in the midst of barren winter, infinitely outshone them all? O it would have been one of the best schools that pride ever entered; and as the assembled multitudes went back to their various spheres of fashion and folly, even though they might have resumed the contest for the superiority over one another, in dress, equipage, entertainments, and dwellings, they would never henceforth have hoped to equal the glories of a New England winter.

Would too that she, whom Cowper calls
Imperial mistress of the fur clad Russ,
who constructed a palace of ice, had witnessed
this scene. The project was indeed a magnifi-
cent one; and it is well described by the poet:

" No forest fell

When thou wouldest build: no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls: but thou didst hew the floods
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace poetry might place
The armoury of winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected grave.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there;
Ice upon ice, the well adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement asked
Than water interposed, to make them one.
So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frost-bound
Firm as a rock; a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
As soon to slide into a stream again."

But had the imperial Catherine been permitted to enter such a temple as Nature built of the same material, among the hills of New England, how would she and her architects have shrunk from the enterprise, with such a model before them.

" Thus nature works as if defying art;
And in defiance of her rival powers,
By these fortuitous and random strokes,
Performing such inimitable feats,
As she with all her rules can never reach."

Vain, however, is the wish to bring hither the princes, the nobility, or the fashionables, of other lands, or even of our own, to teach them a lesson of humility. Few of them will ever hear of the magnificent scene so lately around us. But let not us, who have feasted upon it

so many days, suffer it to pass without instruction. We have the same unholy desire as they, to outstrip others in the unhallowed chase after fashionable show and external decorations; and we owe it to circumstances and Divine restraints, if we have not gone to the same excess of vanity. When tempted again to chase the phantoms, let us turn to the realities of nature and be satisfied.

This leads me to remark, in the fifth place, that the scene under consideration furnishes a striking example of that impartial benevolence of the Deity, which has so widely diffused the richest gifts of nature, that they cannot be monopolized, but are the common property of the whole human family.

Men endeavour to monopolize whatever they can, to themselves, or families, or party, or sect. As soon as the wealthy and the fashionable find that the community generally are able to obtain an article of dress, or ornament, or luxury, which they supposed was exclusively theirs, they cease to desire it, and go in pursuit of something new. But mark how different is the impartial benevolence of God; and how it rebukes this contemptible spirit of self-aggrandizement and self-appropriation. The most valuable of nature's bounties are the common property of all. The air, the water, the beauties of the seasons, the glories of morn, noon, and evening, the delightful prospects above, around, and beneath, can never be monopolized. Men may map off the earth's

surface: they may surround this portion and that, with moats and walls, and call it their own; and there they may erect stately mansions, and add to the natural scenery, all the charms of art. But they cannot shut up the lungs of the humblest individual who is a freeman, so that he shall not inhale the pure atmosphere: nor close his eyes to the beauties of heaven and earth; nor his ears against the sweet symphonies of nature. Nay, if that poor man's heart has been warmed by the love of nature and of nature's God, he has a more real and substantial property in the fields and habitations around him, than the nominal possessor, with all his legal titles.

“ His are the mountains, and the valleys his;
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy,
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say, ‘ My Father made them all.’
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love,
That plann'd and built and still upholds, a world
So cloth'd with beauty for rebellious man.’ ”

One of the objects which the wealthy and the titled have hitherto succeeded most effectually in monopolizing, is the most splendid of the gems dug out of the earth; leaving only the smaller specimens, or imitations in glass, for the

community at large. And because these larger specimens are very few, and therefore have assumed an enormous factitious value, princes and others of great wealth, have succeeded in keeping them in their hands: and by bringing them out only on great occasions, they have been able to attract the attention and excite the admiration of the multitude. But the inhabitants of New England at least, have now, for many days, had placed before them an exhibition of nature's gems, which casts into the shade all the crown jewels of Europe and Asia. Had they all been suspended upon a single tree in our forests, they would scarcely have been noticed amid the profusion of glories poured forth by richer gems around them. Henceforth should any of us have an opportunity to witness a coronation, or triumphal procession, or carnival feast, in Europe, or any of the public pageants in our own land, which are yearly becoming more imposing, and ape regal splendour more and more, we must feel how wretched an imitation they all are, of that splendid coronation season, when God's own hand placed the crown, which his infinite skill had constructed, upon the hoary brow of winter. Said a Roman emperor, near the close of life, "I have been all, and all is nothing:" so when any of us have seen the richest exhibitions of mere human skill which man can offer, we can say, "We have seen all,

and all is nothing, compared with that coronation season of nature."

In the sixth place, the subject teaches us how grateful we should be, for the rich and exhaustless source of happiness that is opened before us, in the study of the works of God.

The phenomenon under consideration is one that lay open to the observation of all, though it required some careful examination to bring out all its glories; and its novelty and brilliancy could not but excite general admiration. But really, this is only a sample of the novelties and beauties that are almost continually rewarding the researches of him, who devotes his time to the careful and minute study of the works of God, aided by the light of modern science. The casual and general observer soon ceases to be interested, because he looks only at the surface, and soon exhausts all the novelties. He merely stands on the outside of the temple of nature, and after gazing for a time at its noble proportions, and splendid columns, his interest subsides. But he who really studies the works of God, because he loves them, is admitted into the Penetralia; and there ten thousand new objects reward his search; opening continually before him, until he reaches the very Holy of Holies, and becomes a consecrated priest. He has acquired a relish for objects that always delight, but never satiate. Henceforth he possesses a

source of happiness of which the fluctuations of life cannot rob him. The world may frown upon him, and prove false; and he may turn away with loathing from its vanities. But nature is ever the same: and her sweet voice always falls with soothing power upon the forlorn and disconsolate heart of her votaries; because she points them to the Author of Nature; and in the marvellous developments of his skill and benevolence, which she unfolds, she shows them how safely they may trust in Him, to carry them through their earthly pilgrimage; and what new and higher developments they may hope for in another state, to give them nobler employment and more extatic enjoyment for ever. Having thus cast themselves upon the bosom of nature and nature's God, it will be in vain that the storms of the world beat upon them, and the waves of affliction roll over them. Their anchor will not quit its hold till life does; and even amid the frosts of age, like the volcano surrounded by polar snows, the flame of sanctified Christian love for nature, will throw a brighter radiance over the wastes of time.

Can there be a doubt, now, but God intended that man should find in the study of his works, a rich and substantial source of happiness here, and a means of preparation for happiness hereafter? For not only has he laid open before all classes and conditions a most inviting field, but

he has implanted in the young heart susceptibilities always awake to natural beauty: and the child always loves nature enthusiastically. But alas! in civilized society, how early are artificial objects crowded in between him and nature, until factitious wants and desires supplant those that are natural; and he is put upon the hot race after the conventional distinctions of life. Even as early as his school-boy days, certainly as early as the quadrennial period of college, nature has been almost forgotten in his thoughts and affections; and his desires have become concentrated upon elegance of personal appearance and equipage, upon the acquisition of property, or civic honours, or, what is worse, upon sensual gratifications. Even the study of the works of God, as science develops them, so fascinating to the unsophisticated mind, has become to him an unpleasant task, to which he must be drummed up by rigid rules. He lives, indeed, in the midst of nature's magnificent museum; but remains most profoundly ignorant of its contents: for his attention is devoted to the gewgaws and trinkets, the puppet shows and histrionic feats, which fashion, and ambition, and sensuality have surreptitiously introduced there. With these he becomes familiar: and as a consequence, it may be he attains that distinction in the fashionable or political world, which he seeks, and that amount of wealth which

enables him to gratify his largest desires after show and equipage, and sensual indulgence. While the hey-day of life lasts, these objects are sufficient to satisfy him: but as its autumn advances, these artificial pleasures begin to pall upon the senses; and becoming disgusted with fashionable and public life, he flees to retirement for relief. Alas! he has no relish for the only thing that can make retirement pleasant, namely, the study of nature: and it is now too late to acquire new affections. He must, therefore, try to quiet his restless spirit, as well as he can, with the same husks on which he has been feeding. Political intrigues, and party politics, and the rivalries and slanders of social life, must still be his resource. And if the possession of religion does not inspire him with hope beyond the grave, wretched indeed must be the remainder of his pilgrimage. But did he possess a love of nature, sanctified by a love of nature's God, the God of redemption, how sweetly might the evening of his days pass: and when his sun went down at last, how short would be the night, and how bright the morning that would follow!

Do I seem extravagant in representing the substitution of artificial for natural tastes and desires and pursuits in society, to be so general and so injurious? But to refer to the case in hand: how many there are, who have not noticed the splendid phenomenon that has passed

before us, as any thing worth remembering ! How many, who would take an hundred times more interest in the tinsel glitter of a public entertainment, or a ball-room, or a political procession, or a theatre, than in the splendours, which, to an unperverted taste, have made all artificial displays tame and insignificant ! How many, who would cross the Atlantic to witness a coronation, or a military parade, but who have not felt interest enough in these far richer exhibitions, to go out of their dwellings ! How many, who, when standing upon the banks of Niagara, would see only a great mill dam : or who, when looking down into the deep and fiery crater of Kilauea, would think of nothing but a great forge : or whose most important inquiry, when looking abroad from the highest mountain peak in North America, would be, what use could ever be made of so much wild land : or whose admiration, when first seeing the moons of Jupiter, or the ring of Saturn, or the lunar mountains, through a telescope, or a planet crossing the sun's disc, or a total eclipse at noon day, whose admiration, I say, would rise no higher, than the utterance of some contemptible joke. Now when God has crowded the world in which we live with an endless profusion of the most attractive and astonishing wonders, for the very purpose of leading us to study and admire them ; and when I know that that study

would exert a most salutary influence upon the social, moral, and religious character of all classes and all ages: how can I, without the deepest pain, see so many of the community manifest an almost sottish indifference to all these wonders, and follow with infatuated eagerness after those artificial vanities, which are many of them most hurtful, and all of them as inferior to nature, as man is to the Deity!

In the seventh place, the phenomenon we have been contemplating, affords us a more vivid conception of several objects of interest described in Scripture than we could obtain in any other way.

What Christian has not meditated with deep interest, upon the bush which the patriarch saw in the desert of Sinai, burning with fire, yet unconsumed, from which there came forth the voice of God, saying, "Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Yet during the last fortnight, we have had many vivid resemblances to that burning bush. At the rising and setting of the sun, whole forests seemed to be lighted up almost into a blaze. But to my own eye, a representation of this miracle, equally striking, was seen at the rising of the full moon, which threw a more golden splendour over the boughs of tree and shrub, than had been done by the sunlight, whose reflection had a more silvery aspect. And

was there no Divine voice issuing from the bush, thus lighted up by God's own hand? The ear of sense could not hear any, as it did upon Sinai: but to the ear of faith it came in distinct accents, saying, "Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." The whole scene, indeed, has been full of God, and stupid must be that heart which did not realize his presence.

In the next place, who could help noticing in this whole scene, a resemblance to the scriptural representation of the New Jerusalem? "Her light," says John, "was like unto a stone most precious; even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal: and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east, three gates: on the north, three gates: on the south, three gates: and on the west, three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was of pure gold like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper: the second, sapphire: the third, a chalcedony: the fourth, an emerald: the fifth, a sardonyx: the sixth, sardius: the seventh,

chrysolite: the eighth, beryl: the ninth, a topaz: the tenth, a chrysoprasus: the eleventh, a jacinth: the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." This description is not, indeed, to be understood literally. But what richer group of objects could be brought together, in order to give us some idea of the splendour and glory of the future residence of the righteous. Yet how imperfect an idea of that splendour, after all, do most men obtain from this description, because they have never seen the rich gems here put as representations of heavenly glory. And although I had often seen them, in the discharge of professional duties, yet I confess that my conceptions, too, were faint and feeble compared to what they now are. We have had before us, from day to day, a far richer exhibition of these very gems, than all the lapidaries on earth can furnish, although I fear that very few have seen the full glory of this part of the exhibition: but sure I am, that those who did see it, must have a livelier apprehension of the purity and glory of heaven than they had before. And if even in the present world of sense and sin, God permits nature occasionally to put on so splendid a dress, what overpowering magnificence may even the material universe assume, in that world

where it will be no longer fettered and darkened, and where the human soul will need no organic sensorium! Oh! what Christian's heart does not sigh after that nobler state of being, and pant for deliverance from that sin and imperfection, which can never dwell in so resplendent an abode!

John closes his description of the new Jerusalem, by saying, "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." And so would I say in regard to the scene which has been described. For wher-
ever one stood in looking upon it,

"So like a temple did it seem, that there
A pious heart's first impulse would be prayer."

And so impressively present did God seem, that all nature was converted into a fane, and every object into an altar.

Finally, this scene gives us an impressive idea of the value of that fear of the Lord, which is wisdom, and of that departing from evil, which is understanding.

"Where," says Job, "shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it, and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels, or fine gold. No mention shall be made

of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." And, to assure us what he meant by wisdom and understanding, Job adds, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding."

Here, too, the sacred writer chose the most costly and splendid productions of nature, to show how worthless they all are when compared with true piety. Suppose now, that all the ice drops which have covered our forests, had been real gems, and might have been gathered like fruit, and converted into money. How poor, according to the Scriptures, would be the possessor of them all, if wanting in supreme love to God.

" Oh! thou most bounteous Giver of all gifts,
Thou art Thyself of all thy gifts the crown.
Without Thee we are poor, give what thou wilt:
And with Thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

Are any of my hearers destitute of this boon, which all the treasures of earth cannot purchase? Let them be assured that Jesus Christ offers it to them without money and without price, having purchased it at an infinite sacrifice. Oh! think of the final remorse and agony of that soul, which shall refuse the priceless gift, and be lost, lost, lost, for ever.

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